A DISCOURSE

Concerning the *Danger* of

APOSTACY

Especiall as to those that are the *CHILDREN* and *POSTERITY* of such as have been eminent for God in their Generation.

Delivered in a Sermon *preached in the* Audience *of the* General Assembly *of the* Massachusetts Colony, *at* Boston *in* New-England, *May* 23. 1677. *being the Day of* Election *there.*

By *INCREASE MATHER.*
Teacher of a Church in *Boston* in *New-England.*

Jer. 23. 28. *He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully.*

1. Tim. 5. 21. *I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Elect Angels, that thou observe these things, without prefering one before another, doing nothing by partiality.*

Tit. 2. 15. *These things speak and exhort and rebuke with all authority.*

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To the Reader.

THE Title-Page prefixed to this Diſcourſe, intimateth the Time and Occaſion of its delivery. I had no cauſe to (nor did I) expect that it would fall to my Lot to ſpeak, before the Choice was made; if I had I would have uſed means to prevent that trouble from coming upon my ſelf or others. But it may be God did it to prove me, and ſee whether I would pleaſe men or Chriſt. And I hope I may (in ſome meaſure) ſay after the Apoſtle, We are bold in our God to ſpeak. Our Exhortation was not of Deceit, but even ſo we ſpeak not as pleaſing men but God, which tryeth our hearts. For neither at any time uſed we flattering words, nor of men ſought we glory. That great Reformer in Scotland, when upon his Death-bed, could ſay with comfort, That I did forbear none of what Condition ſoever, I did it out of the fear of my God, who hath placed me in the Function of his Miniſtry, and I know will bring me to an account. Even ſo I muſt confeſs, the awful ſenſe of the great opportunity which the Lord put into my hands to diſcharge my Conſcience, in being witneſs to his Name and Truth, and of the account which I certainly know I muſt give to Him, cauſed me to ſpeak as I did. (And to avoid more controverſal diſcourſes) There is indeed one particular inſiſted on, which is now become a matter of Scruple

and diſpute to ſome amongſt us, viz. that which concerns the Magiſtrates power in matters of Religion. But as it was by me either intended or expreſſed, I know not to this hour why any one ſhould be offended at it. I may better ſpeak in this cauſe than ſome others, as having my ſelf had experience what it is to have Conſcience impoſed on, and therefore would be loth that any truly conſcientious ſhould be burdened; and it is ſufficiently known that I have a greater latitude and Indulgence in the point of Toleration, than many better than my ſelf have. Nevertheleſs I judge it moſt unreaſonable that pretended Liberty of Conſcience ſhould be an Aſylum for the profaneſt errors to take Sanctuary in: As though men muſt therefore have Liberty to profane Sabbaths or Sacraments, or ſet up an Altar againſt the Lord's Altar, and their Threſhold by his Threſhold, & their Poſts by his Poſts, when and where they pleaſe: It cannot be but the Lord will be provoked at ſuch things, eſpecially in New-England where men are not under ſuch temptations to forſake their Aſſembling themſelves together, as in ſome other places: And where Zeal on the other hand hath been notorious, ſo that ſuch Lukewarmneſs will in a People circumſtanced as we are, be an evidence of Apoſtacy.

I remember I had once the Happineſs to be acquainted with an eminent Divine in another part of the world, who having an opportunity to give his Teſtimony againſt a prevailing Evil which the greateſt

greateſt in that Nation were at that time too far carried away with, in his Sermon had this expreſſion. What I have to ſay, if it were in a Church full of Kings I would ſpeak it. *Such a ſpirit I believe doth become an Embaſſadour of Chriſt, when delivering the meſſage of his* Maſter Jeſus. *I ſhall therefore add no more at preſent, only conclude, that if what is here expreſſed be but* my own words or thoughts, *it is no great matter what's ſaid, but if it be (as I am perſwaded it is) the* word & mind of Chriſt, *then that God whoſe I am and deſire to ſerve, and in whoſe Name I have ſpoken will ſurely confirm his word.*

Boſton, 22. day of 5 2.
Month 1678.

INCREASE MATHER.

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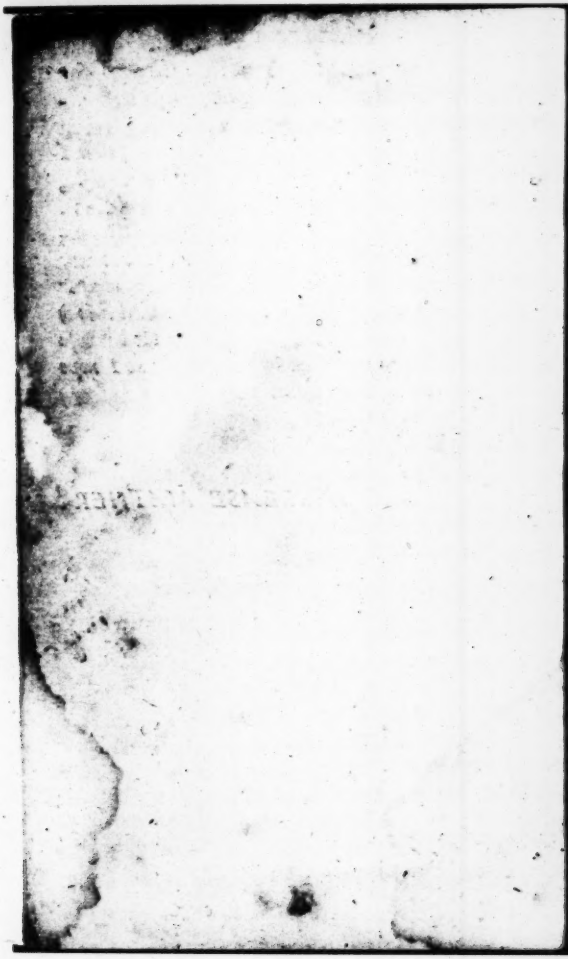

1. Chron. 28. 9.

But if thou forſake him, he will caſt thee off for ever.

AS there is a peculiar Excellency in all the Books of Scripture, becoming the Majeſty of their Author; ſo it is in ſpecial manner true with reſpect unto this Sacred Book of *Chronicles*: which is [a] not the ſame with thoſe Chronicles we ſometimes read of in the *Kings*, thoſe being civil Records, but theſe wholly of a divine Inſpiration, containing the Hiſtory of no leſs than three Thouſand & five Hundred years; even from the firſt man Adam unto the Jews Return from the Babyloniſh Captivity, and many years after that alſo. The Hebrews ſuppoſe it (or at leaſt ſome part of it) to be the laſt Book of Scripture that was written, and therefore they are wont to place it laſt in their Bibles, as the concluding Book of the Old Teſtament. The Greeks entitle it [*ton paraleipomenon*] Becauſe diverſe things moſt worthy of eternal Commemoration are related in theſe books, which are

[a] *See the Engliſh & Dutch Annot.*

are no where elſe to be found. So in this Chapter we have Davids Solemn Dying Exhortation: words which deſerve to be recorded, and yet are no where elſe ſeen (at leaſt wiſe not in that ample manner) but in this Chapter. And it was in a very ſolemn Aſſembly that theſe words were ſpoken, indeed in a *General Aſſembly*, when all the Lords people both as to Civil and Eccleſiaſtical order were come together for the Eſtabliſhment of another Ruler amongſt them; accordingly David doth here direct his Exhortation, firſt to the repreſentatives of the people, *ver.* 1. *And David aſſembled all the Princes of Iſrael, the Princes of the Tribes, and the Captains of the Companies that ministred &c.* Hence they are ſaid to be all Iſrael, *ver.* 8. *in the ſight of all Iſrael* h. e. the Heads and Repreſentatives of all Iſrael, and therefore are ſaid to be *the Congregation of the Lord.* Often in Scripture by the *Congregation*, the Heads and Rulers of the Congregations are meant. Now the Exhortation unto them is that they would *keep and ſeek all the Commandments of the Lord*, h. e. that they would obſerve what they did know, and ſeek to know more of the mind of God. The motive whereby he urgeth this is, becauſe the Lord had promiſed the good Land to them but it was upon that condition of their keeping his Commandments, therefore it did highly concern them to be careful in that matter.

2*dly*, he directs his Exhortation to him that was to be eſtabiſhed as chief Ruler, *ſcil.* to his ſon Solomon, whom God appointed to ſucceed his Father in the Government: Now Sincerity was the main thing which David his Father did exhort him unto, in the beginning of this verſe, *And thou Solomon my ſon, know thou the God of thy Father, and ſerve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind.* This is further urged from three motives,

1. From the Conſideration of the divine Omniſciency, *For the Lord ſearcheth the hearts & underſtandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts.*

2. From the benefit and good which would follow upon ſeeking to the Lord, *if thou ſeek him he will be found of thee.*

3. From the evil that is in forſaking him; In the words now before us; which though they were ſpoken to Solomon, yet were they of equal Concernment unto others, being circumſtanced as he was, *i. e.* that were of the younger ſucceeding generation, being alſo the Children and poſterity of godly Parents. Eſpecially the words did and do concern thoſe that are the *Poſterity of David*, that is to ſay, of thoſe that have bin eminent Servants of God in their Generation. The Doctrine which I would therefore (by the help of Chriſt) inſiſt on as Conceiving that it may not be altogether unſuitable for this great Audience, is this,

Doct. *That if they who are the Children and Posterity of God's eminent Servants shall forsake the Lord, he will cast them of for ever.*

In the doctrinal handling of this Truth, there are four things which may be briefly enquired into. 1. When men, especially the Children of Gods servants, may be said to forsake him. 2. What is implyed in this casting off for ever? 3. What forsaking of God that is, which will be attended with such Casting off. 4. The Reason of this dreadful Procedure of the Most High towards the Posterity of His People.

Quest. 1. *When may men be said to forsake the Lord?*

Answ. 1. *When they depart from the blessed Truths of God*, then *they may be said to forsake him.* Hence the Apostle chargeth it upon the apostatizing Galatians that they were *removed from him that called them* Chap. 1. 6. *h. e.* they had forsaken God himself, because they had corrupted and forsaken the great Truths of the Gospel. All Truth is from God, therefore he is styled *the God of Truth*, Deut. 32. 4. Yea, *Truth, it self*, 1. Joh. 5. 6. And Truth is said to be his Name. Christ said to his faithful ones in the Church of Pergamus, *thou holdest fast my Name.* Rev. 2. 13. The Truths of Christ were much opposed by the Infidels, and

and by the Hereticks of those dayes, only some did faithfully adhere thereunto; and these are said to hold fast his Name. So then to forsake the Truth, is to forsake the Lord's Name. Especially when there is Apostacy from great foundation-Truths in Religion, the Lord is forsaken. Albeit every truth hath the Name of God stamped upon it, yet there are some Truths which have more of his Name on them than others have, that the disowning of them is absolutely to reject the Lord, namely Fundamental Truths, which indeed are not many nor hard to be known. Moreover when those Truths are disowned by children, which their Fathers were eminently engaged in the profession of, (tho' they should not be fundamental as in their natures) such Children may be said to forsake the Lord.

2. *When men Deifie any other Object besides the Lord.* They that set up other things in God's stead, in their so doing forsake the Lord; so it is when men give religious worship to any other besides him, who *alone* ought to be feared. Thus the children of Israel because they did worship *Baal* and *Ashtoroth*, h. e. the [b] *Sun* and *Moon* (for those were the first Creatures that the Gentiles idolized, & the *Syrians* call'd the Sun *Baal* & the Moon *Astereth*) they

[b] *Corn. a Lapide in locum Lucian de dea Syria Herod. Lib.* 5.

they are therefore charged with Forsaking God, *Judg.* 2. 12. 13. Idolatry is the greatest Apostacy in the world: Such are by way of eminency styled *forsakers of God*, Deut. 32. 15. *He forsook God*, meaning that they did apostatize to Idolatry, therefore in *ver.* 16. it is added that *they provoked him to Jealousie with their strange gods*, that is to say with new gods or Idols, (for new things are strange) *ver.* 17. *they sacrificed to new gods, which came newly up, whom their Fathers feared not.* And this is true not only with respect unto that more grosse Idolatry when men shall avow the service of Idols, but also concerning secret, spiritual, Heart-Idolatry, even worldlines, *Mat.* 6. 24. *Ye cannot serve God and mammon.* The servants of Mammon *h. e.* of the world, are forsakers of God, when men pour out the strength of their affections upon worldly objects, Or place their cheif Delight and Confidence in these things, it argues an heart departure from the Lord *Jer.* 17. 5. If Fathers have sought Christ and the things of Christ in the first place, and their Children shall come after them, and espouse a worldly Interest, it is a woful God-forsaking.

3. *There is a forsaking God in respect of his holy Institutions*, Hence a people that are without Ordinances, are said to be without God, 2. *Chron.* 15. 3. it is there mentioned that *Israel*

Israel had for a long season been without the true God, because they had been without the Ministry and without Ordinances. If these be duly observed the Lord is forsaken, *Isa.* 65. 11. *but ye are they that forsake the Lord, and forget my holy mountain*, so that to forget the holy Mountain *h. e.* the neglect of Divine worship and Ordinances, is a Forsaking of the Lord. Look as when the Lord doth deprive a people of his Ordinances, He is said to forsake them, *Jer.* 23. 33. *I will even forsake you saith the Lord*; the meaning is (saith *Calvin*) you shall no more have Ministry and Ordinances among you; so when they are willing to be deprived thereof, they may be said to forsake him, *Judg.* 10. 6. *they forsook the Lord and served him not.* Not to regard the Service of God is to Forsake him. For in Ordinances we have to do with God, *Heb.* 12. 13. in Hearing the Word, in Prayer, in Sabbaths, in Sacraments we have to do with God.

Or if his holy Ordinances be Corrupted then the Lord is forsaken. And it is when men will be adding their Inventions to Gods Institutions, Psal. 106. 39. *Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own Inventions.* When men follow their own inventions, they go a whoring from the Lord: of this nature were the high places of Old, 2. *Chron.* 33. 17. *The people did sacrifice in the high places, yet to the Lord*

their God only. † Those high places were lawful to worship God in until the Temple was built, but after that, it was a breach of the second Commandment to place any religion in them, and therefore in some Degree a Departure from the Lord. If Fathers have prized Ordinances above the world, and endeavoured to uphold them in their power and purity, but their children after them shall not regard whether they enjoy the ordinances of Christ or no, or if they do, shall not be careful and studious to keep them pure, according to Scripture Rule, they fall under this dreadful Charge of *Apostacy* from God.

4. *There is a forsaking of God in respect of Conversation.* There are that by works deny God, *Tit.* 1. 16. An holy Heavenly Conversation is expressed in the Scripture by that of *walking with God*, Gen. 5. 24. and 6. 9. Therefore an evil Conversation is a departure *from* God. It is called a forsaking the Law of the Lord, *Jer.* 9. 13. By a corrupt Conversation men deviate from the Law, and are such Apostates as the Text speaks of: In this respect those wicked men whose foundation was destroyed with the flood, (as Eliphaz speaketh) even the sinners of the old World were Apostates from God. We do not read of

† *See Engl. Annot. on* 1. *Sam.* 6. 14.

of (nor do I believe that there was) any [illegible] atry in the old World, but they were o[illegible] run with Atheiſm, Pride, Senſuallity, Uncle[illegible] neſs, Oppreſſion, and the like ſcandalous [illegible] normities. And the Apoſtacy of the Child[illegible] of Iſrael did Conſiſt partly in this, as we [illegible] in that woful inſtance of the *Benjamites*, [illegible] greateſt part of whom the Lord caſt off for ever. Yea, and the Antichriſtian Apoſtacy predicted in the New Teſtament doth conſiſt partly in this: We know that the Antichriſtian Generation (Papiſts I mean are generally not only (as all of them are) horribly ſuperſtitious and idolatrous, but of moſt debauched & profane conſciences & converſations: In the *Revelations* were ad of their Murthers, Sorceries, Fornications, Thefts, *Chap.* 9. 21. If then the Children of the Covenant ſhall not walk worthy of God, but in the wayes of Pride, Senſuallity, Unrighteouſnes; if when Fathers have been of an holy, exemplary Converſation, their Children ſhall be unholy and prophane, they are forſakers of God, concerning whom he hath threatned to caſt them off for ever, 1. *Sam.* 8. 3.

5. *When the Fear of God is wanting in the hearts of ſuch as are above others bound to fear and ſerve him, They are Forſakers of the Lord.* For there is an inward heart-departure from God, as well as that which is outward and [illegible] viſible

[illegible] it is [illegible] there is no Faith nor [illegible] of God in the heart, *Heb.* 3. [illegible] *Take [illegible] there be in any of you an evil heart of un-[illegible] in departing from the living God.* Infidel-[illegible] in the heart is the Root of all Apostacy. [illegible] the Children of godly Parents shall not en-[illegible] favour truly to fear and serve the Lord God of their Fathers, they are such as do forsake him, yea, and such as he will cast off for ever. And therefore in this Context David did intimate unto his son Solomon, that if he did not serve the Lord even with a perfect heart, he should be cast off for ever.

We proceed therefore to the second Question, Viz.

Quest. 2. *What is imply'd in this* Casting off for ever?

Answ. 1. *It Implyeth a Change as to divine Dispensations.* In the Scripture, when the Lord threatned to cast off his people, that is intended *viz.* that he would make an alteration as to the tenour of his Dispensations towards them: here it is set in opposition to *finding God*, if thou seek him, he will be *found* of thee, but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off: Now *finding* God doth Imply the enjoyment of his favour, and therefore in *casting off* is implyed the Deprivement of the Lords favourable presence. It is indeed most true, that the special favour of God is unchangeable, *Rom.* 5. 2. *This*

grace

Grace wherein we stand. He [illegible]
cess into the special grace and [illegible]
stands and abideth therein for ever, in [illegible]
of that there is no casting off for ever: In [illegible]
Covenant of grace the Lord hath promised [illegible]
ing, *I will not cast of the seed of Israel for all* [illegible]
they have done, Jer. 31. 37. But then th[illegible]
is common favour, in respect of outward bl[illegible]
sings, which are the effects of common lo[illegible]
and that may utterly cease *Hos.* 9. 15. *I* [illegible]
love them no more. I have loved them, (sa[illegible]
the Lord, *h. e.* bestowed outward mercies [illegible]
them, but I will do so no more. They [illegible]
have no more such dayes of peace, no more
such plenty, no more such means of grace [illegible]
once they did enjoy. Thus of a freind, th[illegible]
Lord may turn to be an enemy, *Isai.* 63. 1[illegible]
But they Rebelled and vexed his holy Spirit; the[illegible]
fore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fo[illegible]
against them. Whilst a Covenant people [illegible]
it so as not to break Covenant, the Lord [illegible]
eth them visibly, but if they degenerate, [illegible]
blessings are removed, and woful Judg[illegible]
come in their room, and that's implyed [illegible]
this *Casting off* which the Text speakes [illegible]
that mercyes shall be taken away: As [illegible]
said of Saul that when God cast him off, he
took away his mercy from him, 1. *Chron.* [illegible]
13. because he was deprived of that gr[illegible]
ward Blessing and Dignity which once he di[illegible]
enjoy. And the sending of contrary miseries

to those mercies, that instead of peace, there shall be wars, instead of plenty poverty, instead of health terrible sicknesses, instead of Planting, Plucking up and destroying, these things are implyed in this *Casting off*; thus psal. 89. 38. *But thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wroth with thine anointed.* I conceive the Psalmist in those words hath [c] respect to the sad Change of Providence which befel the Lords People in Rehoboam's time, for that psalm was written by *Ethan*, who was contemporary with Solomon, & probably lived to see the woful Changes which hapned five years after Solomons death, when the Land was invaded and sorely wasted by Heathen Enemies, and some (tho not all) of the wrath of God Poured out upon his people, and upon the apostatized Children of David; Strong holds were brought to ruin, and they did not stand in the day of Battle as in former times they had done, now these temporal Judgments are called a *Casting off*.

2. *It doth Imply a discovenanting and unchurching.* If the Children of godly Fathers shall forsake the Lord, he will cast them off, *h. e.* It will at last come to this, that the Lord will disown them, and excommunicate them, and say they are none of his; for although there is no falling from a state of Saving grace, yet they

[c] *Foord in locum.*

they that have only a viſible Intereſt in God, may fall from that Eſtate, *what they have ſhall be taken from them.* They that are internally and ſincerely in Covenant with God, ſhall never loſe their intereſt in the Covenant, for they are *betrothed unto the Lord for ever, Hoſ.* 2. 19. But they that are externally in Covenant may ceaſe to be the Lords viſible people; Thus it came to paſs Concerning the Ten Tribes. Hence the Lord ſpeaketh as *Jer.* 3. 8. *Back-ſliding Iſrael commited adultry, and I had put her away and given her a bill of divorce.* So that the marriage Covenant which was between the Lord and them them was diſſolved, this is confirmed by the Prophet *Hoſea*, Cap. 2. 2. where the Lord ſaith *plead with your mother, plead for ſhe is not my wife, neither am I her husband,* ſo in Chapt. 1. ver. 9. *Call his name Lo-Ammi for ye are not my people and I will not be your God,* therefore alſo the Lord by the Prophet Ezekiel calls the ten Tribes by the name of *Aholah.* The two Tribes, the Jews, were then called by the name of *Aholibah,* which ſignifieth *my Tent,* becauſe as yet God had not rejected them. But the ten Tribes were called *Abola* which ſignifieth *a Tent,* as if the Lord had ſaid, they are none of mine, now I have done with them and utterly caſt them, *Ezek.* 23. 4. Afterwards the Jews were diſcovenanted and unchurched, the Prophet Zechariah had ſore told, that

their unbelief, in rejecting Jesus Christ the only true Messias, it should be so, *I took my staff Beauty and cut it assunder, that I might break my Covenant which I had made with all the people*, Zech. 11. 10. And Paul tells us, that sad prediction was fulfilled, therefore *Rom.* 11. 12. he speaketh of *the fall* of the Jews, meaning that they were fallen from their visible Church-estate to be in the same condition which the Gentile World was in before the coming of Christ, so that they were fallen from Heaven to earth; and in *ver.* 20, 21, 22. he speaks of their being *broken off* and *cut off*, h. e. cut off from the visible Church. The Apostle [d] in that Chapter doth compare covenanting *Abraham* to a Root, and the visible Church to an Olive tree, of which there are two sorts of Branches; First *Natural*, viz. the Jewish Church, Secondly *Ingraffed*, i. e. the Church [illegible] the Gentiles. Now the natural branches were broken off: and therefore in the New Testament they are declared to be none of the Lords people *Rev.* 3. 9. *They call themselves Jews, but are not so, but are of the Synagogue of Satan.* They say they are Jews, *h. e.* they boast of their being the Lords, people, but in truth they are not so, (saith Christ) they glory in the Name of a Synagogue, but now they are not God's Synagogue but Satan's; And

[d] *See Mr. Cotton of Infant Baptism.*

And in these dayes of the New Testament the Lord hath disowned and unchurched these and those that once were his own people, *Rev.* 2. 5. *I will remove the candlestick out of his place*: that threatning is not only fulfilled on Ephesus but on all the Churches in Asia; there have been in former Ages bright and glorious Candlesticks in that part of the world, but they are long since all broken to peices. Also the Romish Antichristian Idolatry hath greatly prevailed amongst Christians for above these Thousand years, and as for them that are overrun there with, Christ doth declare them to be looked upon as Gentiles, as Heathens, and they are not to be lookt upon as within the Temple, or as indeed appertaining to the visible Church, *Rev.* 11. 2. And this disowning & unchurching a people is called a *Casting off*.

3. The Expression here doth Imply *everlasting Rejection im the other world*. The Hebrew Phrase [*jazni chaka lagnad*] *Arias Montanus* translateth *execrabiter te in aternum*, if thou forsake him he will make thee an eternal execration. Though it be a deep truth that the line of Election [†] doth for the most part run through the loyns of godly parents, yea not *only* so, for men may be descended from godly Parents and progenitors, and yet themselves subjects of eternal Reprobation & Damnation.

[†] *See the preceding Sermon pag.* 39.

[illegible] *The Children of the Kingdom shall* [illegible] *into outer darkness.* We read of one [illegible] call Abraham *his* Father, and unto [illegible] Abraham said *Son* remember that in thy [illegible] thou hadst thy good things, that ne[illegible]theless when he died went to the place of Torment. If such Children forsake the Lord, it is not the prayers nor tears of godly Fathers that will save them; Nay these will be an infinite aggravation of their misery. The tears of a godly father, if his Children forsake the Lord, will make the flames of Eternal fire burn the more fiercely upon their souls for ever. Therefore well might David say to his son Solomon *If thou forsake the Lord he will cast the off for ever.*

We come in the next place to enquire

What Forsaking of God is that, that will be attended with this Casting off?

Answ. In two words, 1. *This must be understood concerning deep departures from God,* and from his blessed wales, *Hos.* 9. 9. *They have deeply corrupted themselves, therefore he will visit their sins.* The Lord is the God of Patience, and of all grace, and thence is very slow in rejecting utterly a people (or their posterity) whom he hath once taken into Covenant with himself: Hence it is not lesser Departures, but high and great Offences against the Lord that provoke him to cast off his people, *E. G.* *Idolatry* is a sin that causeth the Rejection

which

which the text speaks of.
reference unto that Idolatry
the Second Commandement.
Children of Israel commited
specting the Calf in the Wild
ned against the Second Com
they would worship the Lord
would do it in such a way and by such means
as God never appointed, and they were
great danger of being cast off for this sin.
Hence the Lord said to Moses, *Thy people have corrupted themselves*, Exodus 32. 7. The Lord
doth not say *my* people as he was
but *thy* people, as if it were said
have violated my Covenant, and
I should for ever disown and reject them.
Asian Churches have been cast off for
especially; we may read the sin of
Churches written in dreadful Characters
on the Forehead of that Judgment
destroy'd them all: God has let loose
barous Turks upon them, who have
stroy no men so much as those that wor
images. And as for the Church of Rome,
Apostle Paul did solemnly predict
should be cast off *Rom.* 11. 22. Now
this sin principally that the Lord
them off. Again Heresie causeth
off which the Text speaketh of, Societies
sisting of such as disown the Fundamental
Truths of the Gospel, the Lord Jesus

disowns them. Hence the Jews are disowned and rejected by the Lord, for although they own some fundamental truths in Religion, indeed all [e] those six principles mentioned by the Apostle to the Hebrews (*Cap.* 6. 1, 2.) the Jews acknowledge; yet there are other fundation Truths which they reject; That Jesus of Nazareth is the true Messiah, That Messiah is God as well as man, The Doctrine of Original sin, and of Salvation by Imputed Righteousness, all which things are necessary to be believed in order to eternal Life, these do they reject and disown, and therefore the Lord has cast them off When a people shall be so far degenerate as to lose the Essentials of Religion, they are the Lord's no longer. Heretical Assemblies may be *the flocks* of those that pretend to be *Christs Companions*, but they are none of Christ's flocks *Cant.* 1. 7. So for scandalous miscarriages in life & conversation, these provoke the Lord to *cast off* a professing people. In a building, if once the *materials* be rotted and corrupted, the house will moulder away, the *matter* being an Essential Cause: And in Church building we know that Saints are the material Cause and therefore Scandal in Life doth destroy the Essentials of a Church, and so brings along with it this *Casting off* spoken of in the Text.

Secondly

[e] *Jac. Capellus in Hebr.* 6. 2.

2. *It is an Impenitent, Incorrigible Forsaking God*, that doth cause him to cast off a people or person. Solomon was guilty (notwithstanding the solemn, dying charge of his Father to the Contrary) of dreadful forsakings and Apostacies from the Lord but he repented of them, as we see by the Book of the *Ecclesiastes*, & therefore ye Lord did not wholly *cast* him off *for ever*. Notwithstanding great degeneracy in a people the Lord is not wont to Cast them off until he hath used all means for their Recovery; so it was with the Children of Israel of old 2. *Chron* 36. 15. The Scripture hath recorded the names of above Twenty Prophets which the Lord sent to his people of Old to tell them of their back-slidings, and call upon them to repent and reform, before he would cast them off. And though in these dayes of the new Testament, because men sin against greater light and grace than in former times, the Lord Jesus maketh Quicker work with an apostatizing people, than in the dayes of Old, and in the years of ancient Generations, & therefore he said to the Church in Ephesus *except thou consider whence thou art fallen, and repent, and doe the first works, I will come against thee quickly and remove the Candlestick out of his place*: Nevertheless he useth meanes to reduce and recover a backsliding people before he casts them off, so he did with the Asian Churches, and so hath he done with the Ante-

Generation, and therefore raised up great Instruments, who have preached the everlasting Gospel with a loud voice and, called for reformation; and might therefore say [s] as Jer. 31. 9. *We would have healed Babylon, and she is not healed, therefore her Judgment reacheth unto Heaven, and is lifted up even to the skies.* The Lord doth give a first and second Admonition before he doth reject: He tryeth what his word will doe, what lesser and greater Judgements will do, yea and what mercies and deliverances will doe, and if nothing will prevail then he casts off for ever. If a generation be Apostate, and incorrigibly Apostate, it will not be long before the Lord doth *cast* them off for ever, Jer. 15. 6. 7. *Thou hast forsaken me saith the Lord, thou art gone backward, therefore will I stretch out mine hand against thee I will destroy my people sith they return not from their wayes.* In a word, when Apostacy is total and final, then the Lord does reject men, yea, tho' the Children and posterity of his own servants, he casts them off for ever.

QUST. *But why so?*

ANSW. For such Reasons as these.

REAS. 1. Because the Transgressions of such Children as the Doctrine speaks of are peculiar

[s] *Notame Parkero, de Polit. Eccles. et Rainold de Idol. Romane Ecclesiæ.*

peculiar provocations; if the children of David ſin, their Iniquity is attended with ſpecial aggravations: They ſin againſt greater light, and love, and grace, than may be ſaid of any perſons in the world beſides? They that rebell againſt the light, do at laſt provoke the Lord utterly to reject them. Hence it is that refuſing inſtruction, is mentioned as the grand procuring Cauſe of this Rejection, *Jer.* 6. 8. *Be inſtructed O Jeruſalem leſt my ſoul depart from thee, and thou become deſolate.* Now thus it is when the Children of Godly parents forſake the Lord, as Solomon doth acknowledge, how diligent and faithful his bleſſed Father had bin in inſtructing of him, *Pro.* 4. 3, 4. *I was my Father's ſon, he* taught *me alſo, and ſaid unto me keep my Commandments and live.* And ſins againſt grace and peculiar mercy do without Repentance end in everlaſting Rejection, *Amos* 3. 2. *You only have I known ---- therefore will I puniſh you for all your Iniquities.* Who ever eſcape (ſaith the Lord) to be ſure you ſhall not, becauſe you ſin againſt greater grace and favour than any others in the world ever did. For theſe cauſes the Lord threatned Eli that he would cut off his Arm, and the Arm of his Fathers houſe, inaſmuch as he had ſinned againſt peculiar mercies and favours. Eſpecially, ſins againſt Tenders of Goſpel-grace provoke the Lord to *caſt* men *off*, Mat. 23. 37, 38. *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, how often would I have*

gathered you, as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her wings but ye would not, and now your house is left unto you desolate. And this is sadly true concerning the children of godly parents, they sin against special Favours from the Lord, the means of grace is vouchsafed to them, they have many blessed strivings of the Holy spirit with them which others have not, therefore if they forsake the Lord, no wonder if he cast them off for ever.

Reas. 2. Because such Children are guilty of lamentable Covenant-breaking before the Lord for the Covenant is with Children as well as parents, *Deut.* 29. 10, 11, 12. *You and your* little ones *doe enter into Covenant.* Upon this account David saith that the Lord was his God from his *Infancy*, yea, from his first coming into the world, *Psal.* 22. 10. And the like is noted concerning Solomon, and therefore his Father said to him, *My son build the house of the Lord thy God* 1. Chron. 22. 11. The Lord is not only *my* God, but in respect of his gracious Covenant he is *thy* God also. And this seems to be the reason why Abraham is styled the Father of the Faithful. [g] Not meerly on the Account of the eminency of his faith, for we read of others in Scripture whose faith was not inferior to his, but in that he was the first

[g] *See Mr. Carter Abraham's Covenant opened.*

firſt unto whom God expreſly declared, *I will be a God to thee and to thy ſeed*, and withal appointed a ſacred ſign and ſeal of this Covenant. Now Abraham's Covenant is as to the ſubſtance of it *Everlaſting*: And therefore the Children of the faithful in all Ages, are wrapped under the Bond of the Covenant, otherwiſe there would be a ſubſtantial Change of the Covenant from what it was at firſt, than which nothing can be more contradictory to the whole tenor and current of the Scripture. The Apoſtle therefore teſtifies *that the bleſſing of Abraham is come on the Gentiles, through Jeſus Chriſt*, Gal. 3. 14. As God ſaid unto Abraham, I take thee & thy children into Covenant with my ſelf, ſo does He through Jeſus Chriſt ſay the like to every believing Parent among the Gentiles: And therefore the Lord Jeſus did did affirm concerning Children, *of ſuch is the kingdom of Heaven*, Mat. 19. 14. [*b*] It is not only true (ſaith Chriſt) that Children did belong to God under the Old Teſtament, but now, that *the Kingdom of heaven is at hand*, now that the Church is to be under the Heavenly Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, Children muſt be acknowledged there alſo. And it is forever to be obſerved, that when the New Teſtament diſpenſation was ready to be eſtabliſh'd, the Ancient Grant concerning Childrens intereſt in

[*b*] *Mr. Lightfoots on Matth.* 5. 3. *pag.* 61.

in the Covenant is expresly confirmed, *Act.* 2. 39. *The Promise is to you and to your Children.* Hence then, if such Children do forsake the Lord, they are guilty of violating the Covenant. Now that's an Iniquity which does provoke the Lord to *cast off* those that are deeply guilty of it, *Isai.* 24. 5, 6. *They have broken the everlasting Covenant, therefore they are cursed, burned, desolate.* In old time it was the manner when a Covenant was made, some creature or other was killed, and cut in peices, by which Rite was signified, that the Lord would kill and cut off him, that being in Covenant with God, did not make conscience faithfully to keep and observe that Covenant inviolable for ever.

Reas. 3. From that infinite Indignation which is in the Lord's Heart against Apostates. They are Fugitives from Christ, and diserting their Captain the *Lord* himself will execute Martial law upon them: No sinners are greater objects of Divine hatred and indignation. Hence the Apostle said to the Hebrews, when some of them were ready to apostatize from Christianity to Judaism, *If any man draw back the soul of God shall take no pleasure in him.* Heb. 10. 38. meaning that such creatures are vessels of dishonour, and the most loathsome Objects that can be thought of. Hence the Lord doth pursue them with infinite vengeance, he cuts them off and casts them off for ever. As

that

that miſerable *Spira* at the very moment when he had renounced the Truth, though he heard one ſay to him, *Hence thou Apoſtate, and receive the Sentence of thy eternal Damnation*. The Lord is wont to leave marks of his wrath upon ſuch ſinners. He brands them that all the world may be afraid of that Iniquity: Seldome has it been known that any have notoriouſly turned away from the Lord, but viſible wrath from heaven has fallen upon them. *Jehoram* had been religiouſly educated under his godly Father *Jehoſhaphat*; but he proved the Apoſtate Child of a Gracious Father; and what came on him? God let looſe the Heathen Arabians, who waſted his eſtate and murdered all his children ſave one: Thus did the Lord *caſt him off*. *Joaſh* was religiouſly educated under his uncle *Jehojadah*, but he forſook the Lord, therefore the Aſſyrians with a ſmall Army deſtroyed a great Hoſt of his; Afterwards his own treacherous ſervants murdered him. The like we read concerning *Amaziah*. And Hiſtories (beſides what is recorded in Scripture) are full of awful and amazing Examples of the Lords indignation againſt Apoſtates, and therefore ſince if Davids Children do forſake the Lord, they are to be reckoned among the number of Apoſtates. no wonder that He doth threaten to Caſt them off for ever.

We

We proceed now to a word of Aplication, and ſhall inſiſt upon one only

Uſe of Exhortation.

Let us be exhorted in the Name and Fear of God this day, to endeavour that it may not be with us as the Text and Doctrine expreſſeth; let us every one in our ſeveral places and Capallities endeavour that the preſent and ſucceeding Generations in New-England, may not forſake the Lord God of their Fathers, and ſo endanger their being caſt off for ever.

Wherefore Conſider. 1. *What Fathers and Predeceſſours have been*, they were ſuch as did ſeek the Lord. As for the body of the preſent Generation in New-England, It may be ſaid to them, your Fathers were ſuch as did ſerve the Lord: yea, it was love to God and to Jeſus Chriſt which brought them into this Widerneſs as the Lord ſpeaks *Jer.* 2. 2. *I remember the kindneſs of thy youth, the love of thine Eſpouſals, when thou wenteſt after me in the Wilderneſs, in a Land which was not ſown*. Our Fathers did not in their coming hither propound any great matter to themſelves reſpecting this world; only that they ſhould have liberty to ſerve God, and to walk with him in all the waves of his Worſhip. As one of our Worthies has aptly expreſſed, God ſifted three Nations, that ſo he might bring over choice Grain into this Wilderneſs. Let us then remember what New-England hath been: It

hath

hath been a noble Plant, *Jer.* 2. 21. *I planted thee a noble Vine, wholly a right seed.* It hath been Cedar, our eyes have seen the Lord fulfilling that Scripture litterally and gloriously, Isai. 41 19. *I will plant in the wilderness a Cedar.* The chief of the Fathers in these New-English Churches they were *Abrahams:* He, when God called him removed out of *Ur of the Chaldees* to the place which the Lord would shew him, & there built an Altar to the everlasting God; so did our Fathers remove out of their own land when God called them, and came hither to build an Altar here to the Everlasting God, yea, and they have set the Altar upon its right Basis too. Our Fathers have been *Davids*, that is to say, *eminent Reformers.* Let me speak freely (without offence to any) there never was a generation that did so perfectly shake off the dust of Babylon, both as to Ecclesiastical and Civil Constitution, as the first Generation of Christians that came into this Land for the Gospels sake. Where was there ever a place so like unto New Jerusalem as New-England hath been? It was once Dr. *Twiss* his Opinion [i] that when New Jerusalem should come down from Heaven *America* would be the seat of it. Truly that such a Type and Emblem of New Jerusalem, should be erected in so

[i] *See Dr. Twiss's Letters printed in Mr. Medes works. Lib. 4. Epist. 42. pag. 979.*

dark corner of the world, is matter of deep Meditation and Admiration.

Consider, 2. *How subject men are, yea the Children of blessed parents and Predecessours, to apostatize from God.* It is possible that the Children of *David* may forsake the Lord, and that in a short time too: when Predecessors have been eminent for God, their Successours have been most degenerate, *Jer.* 2. 21. *I planted thee wholly a right seed. how art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me!* Isai. 1. 21. *How is the faithful City become an Harlot! it was full of Judgement, Righteousness lodged in it, but now murderers.* It was sometimes said unto good Samuel, *Thy sons walk not in thy wayes.* And it is noted Concerning *Nabal* (a drunken Sot) that he was of the house of *Caleb*, 1. Sam. 25. 3. That ever such a branch should spring out of such a stock! The Ephraimites were the vilest Idolaters of all the apostate Children of Israel, yet they were the posterity of Joseph, the best of Jacobs twelve sons. The Perfidious and ingrateful Ziphites were also the posterity of that blessed *Caleb* but now mentioned. Yea, it is a sad Truth that Religion has seldome been upheld in the power of it, for above one or two Generations together. Therefore it is recorded concerning the Children of Israel, *they turned quickly out of the way which their Fathers walked in, obeying the Commandments of the Lord, but they*

they did not so, Judges 2. 17. The Fathers and Leaders both of the first and second Generation were for purity of worship, but their Children were *not so*. Their Fathers did endeavour to uphold Religion in the Power of it, but *their children did not so*. Their Fathers did order their Conversations according to the holy Rules of the word of God, but *their children did not so*. Hence is that sad Complaint by the Prophet, *they rose early and corrupted all their doings*, Zeph. 3. 7. And if we look into the Scripture and view the Story of former Ages, we shall see this to be true. The posterity of the Lords Servants, the Children of the Church have in a little time so forsaken him, as that solemn Reformation has been necessary: Look beyond the Flood and we shall see it so. One of Adam's children with all his numerous posterity forsook the Lord, Cain was Excommunicate out of the Church and became the Father of an Excommunicate Race and Generation. The first Church that ever was in the world, even that in Adam's Family continued in some measure pure, about the space of [k] an Hundred and thirty years, (*i. e.* until Seth was born) but then great Apostacy prevailed. When the Church was small in one Family it was more easie to keep it pure, by casting out the Apostates, but now the

[k] *Owen de Theol. Lib. 2. Cap. 2.*

grew numerous, and a multitude of ... caused impunity in sin, so as that they ... were godly and conscientious were fain in ... very beginning or first Ages and Generati... of the world to seperate themselves and ... distinct Societies. Hence is that *Gen.* ... *then began men to call upon the Name of the Lord.* It noteth a Separation of the Church from the profane world. After this a second Apostacy followed, that the Church and world were mixed together, even the *sons of God* and *daughters of men*, the Posterity of godly *Seth* & of wicked *Cain*, until such time as the flood came and cleared the world of them, *Gen.* 6. 2. Then were the inhabitants of the earth in a most corrupt estate, wherefore the Psalmist (as it seems) alluding to that time, saith *The Lord looked down from heaven, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God, every one of them is gone back, they are altogether become filthy.* Psa. 53. 2, 3. After Religion was revived in Noah's Family, his posterity quickly forsook the Lord, *Cham*'s Apostacy was (as some learned men observe) about forty years after the flood: The Church was reformed by his ejection, but within sixty or seventy years after that, the Builders of *Babel* set up their wicked Kingdom, which was desperate Rebellion against the Lord, although ... himself was then alive, he could not ... all his Authority ...

and posterity, but they would needs become guilty of that Babel defection. After this within a few Generations the world was over-run with Idolatry. When that iniquity first began is hard to say, but it is evident that in Jobs time (who is thought to live about three hundred and fifty years after the flood) the world was filled with Idolaters, yea, in *Abraham's* time there was such Apostacy as that Religion was almost gone out of the world, only in his Family there was a pure Church Established: Yet his posterity did quickly forsake the Lord. The *Ishmaelites*, *Midianites*, *Edomites*, (and other Nations) who were of the Posterity of Abraham the Father of the faithful, in a few generations lost the *Substantials* of Religion, and were wholly deprived of their Church estate. The Church was settled in Jacobs Family: Corruption & Superstition did creep into his Family, so as that he was fain to set upon a work of solemn Reformation, and that was not two hundred years after the Reformation begun in his grand-father Abrahams Family. After the Church became National, the Truth and power of Religion did very rarely continue above one or two Generations at the most, (sometimes not so long) witness that Scripture which was newly opened and applyed [†] in this place upon the like solemn occasion two years [illegible]

[†] By Mr. MOODEY.

[illegible] 19. And the people ſerved the Lord all the dayes of Joſhua, and all the dayes of the Elders that out-lived Joſhua, who had ſeen all the great works of the Lord that he did for Iſrael. — *And all that generation were gathered unto their Fathers, & there aroſe another generation after them which knew not the Lord nor yet the works which he had done for Iſrael.* Thoſe that were the Grand-children of that generation which was brought out of Egypt, did forſake the God of their Fathers: Hence is that expreſſion *Hoſ.* 10. 9. *O Iſrael thou haſt ſinned from the dayes of Gibeah*; what horrible wickedneſs was in Gibeah, we may read in the 19. & 20 Chapters of the Book of Judges, where we have ſtory of the *Levite's Concubine*, which tho' it be mentioned towards the cloſe of that *Book*, yet it is evident that it hapned before the Judges; for it ſeems *Jebus* (afterward *Jeruſalem*) was not then taken by *the children of Iſrael* Judg. 19. 11. 12. whenas that was taken before they were govern'd by Judges, *Chapt.* 1. *ver.* 8. So that the wickedneſs of Gibeah and their war with the Benjamites, which followed thereupon, was between the death of *Joſhua* & the *Judges*. Moreover, *Phineas* the ſon of *Eleazar* the ſon of *Aaron* was Prieſt in thoſe dayes *Judg.* 20. 28. which makes it very manifeſt that, that moſt corrupt Generation were the grand-Children of thoſe that were firſt embodyed a peculiar people, when the Lord did plant the

Heavens

Heavens and lay the Foundations of the Earth, that is to ſay, did build up the Children of Iſrael as a body politick under Eccleſiaſtical & Civil Government, the *third generation* among that people proved degenerate and apoſtate. And when they were under a *Theocracy* or Government by *Judges*, whom the *Lord* immediately raiſed up and ſet over them, How ſoon did they turn aſide from God, when any of their faithful *Judges* were taken from them? *Judg.* 2. 19. So in the dayes of the Kings: After *David's Reformation* Apoſtacy began in the very next generation, in the dayes of his ſon Solomon, and in the dayes of his grand-Child Rehoboam *all Iſrael forſook the Lord*, until God by a ſad war awakned them to ſome Reformation. In *Jehoſhaphat's* time Religion was upheld in ſome power, but in the very next generation there was Apoſtacy. *Hezekiah* was a great Reformer, but his ſon *Manaſſeh built up again the high places which his Father had deſtroyed, and ſeduced the people to doe more evil than did the Nations whom the Lord deſtroyed before the Children of Iſrael.* After this *Joſiah* wrought a great Reformation, and with him did the work of Reformation and Religion die amongſt the Jews: upon *Joſiah's* death a flood of Land-deſtroying ſins brake in upon that generation, that within the ſpace of two and twenty years after *Joſiah* was gathered unto his fathers, the Jewiſh

State both Civil and Ecclesiastical was quite overthrown. After the Captivity, *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, and the prophets *Haggai* and *Zachary* were great Reformers; but Apostacy quickly prevailed, witness the Prophet *Malachi*, who declareth that not only people but Rulers many of them in his days were become very corrupt: Albeit they were not guilty of that more grosse Idolatry, for which their Fathers were sent into Captivity, yet Covetousnesse which is a spiritual Idolatry they were guilty of, whereby they provoked the Lord to send blasting Providences upon them, there being no greater punishment to a covetous man than to have the world taken from him. That Generation did not keep themselves unspotted of the world, upon which account they are by the Prophet pronounced unclean *Hag.* 2. 13, 14. And when Christ came into the world, he found the Jews in a most degenerate and corrupt estate: therefore did the Lord call them an *evil* and an *adulterous*, and a *viperous Generation*.

Furthermore since the Church hath been by divine Institution *Congregational*, in these dayes of the New-Testament, men have been no less subject to apostacy then in former Ages. The Churches in *Galatia* were strangely & suddenly over-run with Corrupt Doctrine: Hence the Apostle saith *Gal.* 1. 6. *I marvel that ye*

so soon removed unto another Gospel. He might well marvel, if the observation of [*l*] great Chronologers be true that within a year after Paul was removed from Galatia to Ephesus, false Teachers succeeded him, and overthrew his Foundation by endeavouring to advance a mixt Religion consisting of Judaisme and Christianity. And I remember *Jerome* [m] testifieth that in his time all Galatia was overrun with damnable Heresies. And as for the Church in Ephesus they quickly declined, *Rev.* 2. 5. *Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and doe the first works.* It was (as Historains observe about Twenty years after the Ascention of Christ that Paul gathered a Church among the Ephesians. And sixty year after the Ascention the Book of the Revelation was written: So that there had been a Church in that place above forty years; in which time the first members of the Church must needs (in probability) as to the body of them be dead, and another generation of Church members were risen up which were not like the first. The Church in *Thyatira* tho' not so Apostate when the Revelation was written as some other Churches, yet Ecclesiastical Story mentions how that in a few years after that, there was no Church in that place; which was

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[l] *Capellus in Historia Apostilca.*

[m] *In proam ad Galat. Lib. 2.*

one Reason why some ancient [n] Hereticks denied the divine Authority of the *Apocalyps*; because therein mention is made of a Church in *Thyatira*, when as (said they) no Church is to be seen there, To which the Answer is that there had been a Church there, only the *Catephrygian* Heresie did prevail so, as in a little time to swallow up the whole Church. In a word, in all those places which we read of in the Scripture, as having Churches in them, they that are the Successours at this day, are not like unto them that once were in those very places. In many places they have only the Name not the truth of Christianity, and in some not so much as the Name: Albeit, when time was, famous Churches might have been seen in those places. In former Ages Asia was the Seat of the Church, whenas in these latter Ages *Europe* is so, which (o) is judged the Reason why the Book of Revelation speakes of events to come to pass chiefly in Europe; because since the 10 *kings* arose, there has the Lord Christ seen meet to uphold and propagate his Church. What shall be said more? it is evident that in the Apostles dayes the *Mystery of Iniquity* began to work, much more after they fell asleep. In the Autumn of the Apostles Age, there was a great falling of many Professors, *Ebion* and *Cerinthus* sprang up whilst the Apostle

(o) *Mede*,

Apostle *John* was yet living. The very next Ages to the Apostle began to depart from, and corrupt the Simplicity of the Gospel, in diverse respects that might be mentioned, † one long since observed, that altho the Church continued a virgin untill after the Apostles death, then it was soon Corrupted. It is conceived that *Jude* lived after most of the other Apostles were dead, which is judged to be the reason of his expressing himself as he does in *ver.* 17. of his Epistle: Now he complains much of a great degeneracy among those that professed Christianity.

Consider. 3. *The present Generation in New-England is lamentably degenerate.* As sometimes Moses spake to the Children of Israel, *Numb.* 32. 14. *Behold ye are risen up in your Fathers stead an encrease of sinful men.* So may we say, the first Generation of Christians in New-England is in a manner gone off the Stage, and there is another and more sinful generation risen up in their stead. We have in former years enjoyed a Sun-shine of prosperity, and that has bin attended (as useth to be) with great Apostacy. It is an apt Similitude which some use, that as the *heat* of the Sun in Summer breeds a multitude of Insects; so does the *warmth* of Prosperity a multitude of Apostates. Men are loth

† *Hegesyus*

both to *hear on this ear*, but if we ſhould deny it, the Lord does teſtifie againſt us that it is ſo, *Joel.* 1. 2. *Hear this ye old men, and give ear all ye Inhabitants of the Land, hath this been in your dayes, or even in the dayes of your Fathers ſayth the Lord.* Were there (ſayes the prophet) ſuch judgments formerly as now there are? you may therefore conclude that you are departed from God, and by your ſins have provoked him ſo to Puniſh you. Thus may it be ſpoken with reference to our State and Caſe, and the diſpenſations of God towards us, you *old men* that are here before the Lord this day, what ſay you to this Queſtion, did you know ſuch Judgments upon New-England formerly, as of late we have ſeen? was it ſo in the daies of our Parents? were there ſuch general and killing Diſeaſes? Such a long continuing warr? ſo many hundreds cut off by the Sword? yea, ſo many hundred *Families* brought to ruin? Candleſticks removed out of their places, and Plantations made deſolate! In former times we heard of little beſides Settlement of Plantations, and gathering of Churches, but of late years, inſtead of that, Ruines have been multiplyed, yea, miſchief upon miſchief. God has been ſpending his Arrows, & heaping miſchief upon this Generation. This Generation is not like the firſt. How many ignorant ones! how many ſcandalous ones! There is great Rudeneſs amongſt young ones in this Land;

and

and in that respect Degeneracy from the GOOD MANNERS of the Christian world. And such sins as formerly were not known in *New-England* are now become common, such as Swearing, sinful Gaming, &c. yea, the present generation as to the Body of it, is an unconverted generation. I would not lessen the grace of God, I know that through Grace many of the younger Generation are brought home to God in *Jesus Christ*, yet in many (I doubt in most) Congregations the number of sincere Converts is but small, compared with those that remain still in a natural and unconverted Estate. And as for some that have the Root of the matter in them, yet they fall much short of their fathers grace. Solomon was a good man and his soul is now in Heaven, yet he was not like David his Father as to measure of grace and faithfulness, 1. *Kings.* 11. 6. We may see here and there one that hath much of his blessed Fathers spirit and Principles, but how rare are such among us! Nay, the interest of New-England is now changed from a religious to a worldly interest; and in this thing is *the great radical Apostacy of New-England.* Is not this to choose a strange god? Hence do we see Warr in the gates. And the Lord has been *letting* this generation *blood in the right vein*, since he has taken the world away from them. Trade is almost ruined. Farmes, Oxen, Merchandise which things have been

sought

ſought after in the firſt place, how have they failed! *New-England* is not like this twenty years, to be in that comfortable Eſtate it was in but two years agoe.

Conſider, 4. *There is ſad Cauſe to fear what will at laſt come on this Generation*. There is a Conſumption on Religion all the World over, as one well obſerves [p] the burials of Chriſtians are frequent and their Birth is rare. And as for what concerns our ſelves more peculiarly, we may fear that their will be greater Apoſtacy, becauſe they that ſhould have prevented it are gone. Many times the removal of a few eminent ſervants of God in a Common-Wealth, or in the Churches, maketh way for great Apoſtacy quickly to enſue. Was it not ſo with the Children of Iſrael? When they had a good Judge over them, they would ſerve the Lord all the dayes of that Judge, *But it came to paſs when the Judge was dead, they returned and corrupted themſelves more then their Fathers*, Judg. 2. 18. 19. In Nehemiah's time while he was Governour for twelve years together, things went well, and God bleſſed the Land wonderfully, but when he was removed in one years time, thoſe ſins of Opreſſion, Senſuality, Sabbath-breaking, were become prevailing common Evils *Neh.* 13. 6. Alas! our *Nehemiahs* are gone, (I ſpeak it not reflect upon

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[p] *v. Fulfilling Script. in Epiſt. pag.* 2.

upon those that survive, but to awaken from the solemn Consideration of those Bereavements) our Pauls are likewise departed from amongst us in which respect we may fear Corruption in Religion will follow *Act.* 20. 29. *Deut.* 31. 27. *Judg.* 8. 33. Have we not seen it in some places, how that within a year after the death of such an eminent Servant of Christ, Apostacy to this day irrecoverably hath prevailed? Furthermore, the heads of the second Generation, that were most likely to have done good, the Lord has snatched them away, and (like *Enoch*) translated them to Heaven in the midest of their dayes: Others that are most likely to prevent backsliding, and to be Instruments of reforming a corrupted Generation are not likely to continue long in this evil World. yea, and of late, even since the present Warr, (that we are bleeding under) began, the Lord has taken away many young ones either by Sword or Sickness, who were the Hopes of the generation. In many Plantations, they that have dyed of late, were the most hopeful and desirable yong men in the places where they lived! an Ominous sign that there is some terrible thing which God will doe e're this Generation be passed away.

Consider. 5. *How sad it would be if succeeding generations should forsake the Lord.* It is evident

evident from the Conſiderations mentioned, that it *may* be ſo, but it would be diſmal if it *ſhould* be ſo: New-England would of all Lands become the moſt dark and miſerable. How ſadly does the Prophet ſpeak of *Bethaven*! now what was that *Bethaven*? even the ſame that was in former times *Bethel* i. e. the Houſe of God, *Hoſ.* 4. 15. with 1. *King.* 12. 29. *Amos.* 5. 5. If ſuch places where the Houſe of God has been erected do once degenerate, they are like to become *Bethavens*, places of the greateſt vanity and iniquity in the World. Hence is that *Hoſ.* 9. 15. *all their wickedneſs is in Gilgal.* Gilgal was once famous upon Religious accounts: *There* was the Covenant renewed by Circumciſion, *there* was the firſt Paſſover kept by the Children of Iſrael, after their coming into the promiſed Land, *There* did God *appear* to Joſhua, *There* was to be ſeen a famous Monument of the Lord's doing Wonders for his people, *There* was the *Tabernacle* for ſome time, but in after-generations an Idolatrous *Temple* was built there, ſo as that it was a Fountain of much Wickedneſs *All their wickedneſs was in Gilgal.* It ſeems the *Altar of Witneſs* was near that place, which through mens Corruptions might eaſily be abuſed unto much *Superſtition* in after Ages The Devil ſeeketh to corrupt thoſe places eſpecially, which once were famous for religion.

As † *Polanus* obſerveth that *Wittenberg* in Germany was the Town where the Reformation in *Luthers* time began, and therefore the Devil did ſeek to corrupt that place eſpecially, and cauſed it to become the ſeat of grievous Hereſies. What Land under Heaven has been more noted for profeſſion and Religion, than New-England? If Apoſtacy prevails amongſt *ſuch a people*, it is like to be a ſad Apoſtacy indeed: We ſee it already. Hence there are ſuch ſad Complaints of young men that have been bred and born in New-England, when they go abroad into other Lands that none are ſo debauched and profane as ſome of them. If the Lord ſhould be provoked to pluck up the Hedge of civil government, what a fearful flood of Iniquity would ſoon break in! How would madded and inraged Profaneneſs know no Bounds! yea, this Land would become as Sodom, and then moſt deſolating plagues will in ſhort time follow *Ezek.* 33. 28. What became of Cain's degenerate race when they were become I know not how many Millions? the flood ſwept away every mothers child of them: Wherefore all the children of men that are now in the world are ſtyled *the children of Seth*, Numb. 24. 17. [*q*] becauſe as for *Cain's* Apoſtate Generation, they all periſhed in the flood. When the Old World did Apoſtatize

† *Polan. in. Hoſ.* 9. 15. [*q*] *Belgick. Annot.*

Apoſtatize, after the Reformation in the dayes of *Seth*, that ſecond Apoſtacy proved fatal. If Churches in New-England degenerate, it is an Apoſtacy after Reformation. How fatal is ſuch a relapſe like to be! will not the end thereof be with a flood? And truly to be amongſt the laſt Apoſtates will be moſt woful.

Queſt. *But what ſhall be done in order to prevention of Apoſtacy?* What ſhall be done that ſo ſucceeding Generations in *New-England* may not forſake the Lord God of their Fathers?

Anſw. As I have been meditating an Anſwer to this Enquiry, I could not but call to mind that Scripture which ſome of the chief of the Fathers (at leaſt-wiſe thoſe two, † whom I have more reaſon than any one in the world to think of) have upon the like ſolemn occaſion improved many years ſince, I mean that Scripture *Hag.* 2. 4. *Yet now be ſtrong O Zerubbabel ſaith the Lord, and be ſtrong O Joſhua, and be ſtrong all ye people of the Land.* If Zerubbabel, Joſhua, and all the people of the Land, If Magiſtrates, Miniſters and people all do what Duty requireth, the feared Apoſtacy, together with the unavoidable Calamity coming therewith, may be prevented, however in great Meaſure and for a long time.

Firſt

† *My Father Cotton & my Father Mather.*

1. Let me apply my ſpeech unto Zerubbabels, *i. e.* Rulers in the Common-Wealth. Honoured and much Eſteemed, The Welfare or Ill-fate of the preſent, yea, and following Generation doth much depend upon you. *Magiſtrates* are in the Scripture compared to to *Corner ſtones*, becauſe where there is a Common-Wealth erected, the Safety of the whole Building under God depends much upon them: Hence are they alſo termed Foundations, *Pſal.* 11. 3. *If the* Foundations *be deſtroyed, what can the righteous doe?* If David had periſhed, Foundations had been deſtroyed, and the good people of the Land would have dearly felt the loſs of him. And when in Saul's time there were corrupt *Judges* and *Magiſtrates*, it is therefore ſaid that the *Foundations* of the Earth were out of Courſe, *Pſal.* 82. 5. And the prophet *Micah* ſpeaking to the Rulers in the Common-Wealth of Iſrael ſaith, *hear ye* Foundations *of the earth, Chap.* 6. 2. It is with you (by the help of Chriſt) to lay ſuch Foundations as ſhall make Poſterity either happy or miſerable. David improved the power which God in his providence entruſted him with, to *ſerve his Generation according to the will of God*, Act. 13. 36. And therefore was an Eminent Bleſſing to all that Generation wherein he lived. If the Sins of the people under your Care

Care and Charge ſhould ever provoke the Lord to leave you in an hour of Temptation, you cannot poſſibly turn aſide from God alone, but many others will do ſo too, 1. *Kin.* 11. 33. & 12. 30. 2. *Chr.* 24. 18. and 33. 8. *Regis ad Exemplum* --- People are apt to follow the Examples of thoſe in place. You know, it is mentioned concerning Rehoboam, that he within a few years after his coming to the Government did forſake the Lord and *all Iſrael with him*, 2. *Chron.* 12. 1.

Let me then with all due reſpect to your places and to your worth, and yet with that freedom & Faithfulneſs which becomes a Meſſenger of the Lord of Hoſts, propound ſome Things to you, which concern the Welfare of *this*, and *after* Generations in New-England.

1. *I pray you in the Name of the Lord, that a ſpeedy and Effectual Courſe may be taken that the great things that God did for our Fathers in planting thoſe Heavens, and laying the Foundations of this Earth, be faithfully* recorded & *tranſmitted to Poſterity.* This hath been thought of and ſpoken of long enough, but why is it not done? If it be neglected till the preſent Generation be paſſed away, the next will be leſs capable of doing it. The Title of the Book wherein my Text is, leads me to inſiſt on this. Why is this Book called the *Chronicles*, but

but because it contains a Record and Relation of the things which God did for his people in ancient time, yea, from time to time: The Hebrews have termed it, [*dibre hajamim*] *words of dayes* probably (as [r] some conceive) taken out of the Royal *Diaryes* of those times, by divine direction and inspiration; this Book of Chronicles being an unerring [s] Epitome of those Chronicles mentioned in the Kings. The truth is that above half the old Testament is a Chronicle of things done by the Lord for his people, *in the years of ancient generations.* You have then Scripture Example abundantly to encourage, in promoting a work of this nature. Hence we read of the Book of *Jasher*, 2. Sam. 1. 18. and of the Book of *Nathan* the Prophet; and of *Gad* the *Seer*, 1. Chron. 29. 29. and of *Ahijah* the Shilonite, and of *Shemaiah* the Prophet, 2. Chron. 12. 15. and the story of the Prophet *Iddo*, 2. Chron. 13. 22. There is also plain Scripture precept [t] as well as Example to move hereunto, see *Psal.* 78. 5, 6. *For he established a Testimony in Jacob and appointed a Law in Israel, which he Commanded our Fathers, that* they should make them known to their Children, *that the* generations to come might know them, even the Children which should be born, who should

[r] *Grotius.* [s] *Varablus.* [t] *See Mr. Marshal's Sermon on Psal.* 102. 18. *pag.* 31.

ſhould ariſe and declare them to their Children. And again *Pſal.* 102. 18. *This ſhall be written for the Generations to come.* So that this is a duty incumbent upon preſent generations, to take care that there be a *Record* of the great work of God towards them, for the benefit of the Generations that ſhall follow, that ſo God might be glorified. I perceive that ſome good men are affraid leſt our to great neglect in this matter, may be one thing that God is offended at. And there be two Conſiderations which may cauſe ſuch Apprehenſions not to ſeem groundleſs; one is, That this thing hath been formerly urged. [*u*] That faithful *Shepard* who ſpake here in the Name of the Lord on the like occaſion, five years agoe, inſiſted upon this very thing, and yet the matter remains unfiniſhed to this day. Moreover whileſt the Body of the firſt Generation whom God planted in this Wilderneſs was alive, there were Eſſays this way, for it † was Propounded *to* and Concluded *amongſt* the Commiſſioners of the *United Colonies* above Thirty years agoe, that there ſhould be a Collection of Special Providences of God towards his *New-England People*; and that Memorials being duly communicated, an Hiſtory ſhould be Compiled according to Truth, for the benefit

[u] *See Mr. Shepard's Election Sermon p.* 16.

† *See Records of the Commiſſioners Sept.* 9. 1646

benenefit of Posterity, that they might see how God had *been* with their Fathers, in laying the Foundation of the Churches, and of the Common-Wealth; now that such things should be concluded & yet never done, cannot please God. Furthermore, how can we testifie to Posterity our gratitude towards God, for the great things He hath done for our Fathers, and for us their Children, in more respects than can be now mentioned, except such a lasting Record and Monument as I am speaking of, be brought to perfection. In the Town-House at *Geneva*, is written on Marble Pillars in Letters of Gold, Such a year *GOD delivered this place from the Tyranny of Antichrist, and set up His TRUE RELIGION amongst us,* [x] *therefore the Senate and People of Geneva have erected this Monument that so they might testifie their Gratitude towards GOD.* Let me then entreat you that are *Senators* of this Colony, that a work of this nature may not be alwayes delayed; and the rather because you know not whether your opportunity to Encourage such an undertaking, will be of long Continuance. And this may by the blessing of Christ be one good meanes to prevent Apostacy. The Lord therefore Commanded his people of old to keep a Record of his works & signal Providences towards them that, so their Children

[x] *Clark's Examples vol.* 1. *pag.* 238.

Children after them might ſet their hope in GOD and keep His Commandements, Pſal. 78. 7.

2. *I pray you in the Name of the Lord, to take care for the propagation of the Intereſt of the Goſpel*, that the good knowledge of the Lord may be amongſt the People under your Government in your time, yea, and after that alſo. If ignorance overſpread the Land, Apoſtaſie will do ſo too. Hence David here ſaith *know thou the Lord God* of thy Father and ſerve him, but if thou *forſake him* &c. intimating that except ſucceeding Generations *know* the Lord, they will not ſerve him but *forſake* him. Therefore it concerns the Magiſtrate to take Effectual care that the Land be furniſhed with able and faithful Miniſters: So we read of *Jehoſhaphat*, that he cauſed Levites to be ſent into all the Cities of *Judah*, who taught the people 2. Chron. 17. 8. 9. and this ſtands upon Record to his everlaſting Renown. It is not every man that is fit to be employed as a Publique Teacher. *Ezra* ſaith (Chapt. 8. 17, 18.) that he ſent unto ſuch and ſuch, that they would bring unto him *Miniſters for the Houſe of God*, & that by the good hand of God they brought *a man of underſtanding*: He that is employed in *holy things* ought to be ſuch an one. Therefore you ſhould endeavour that the future generation be furniſhed with a learned

Learned Ministry. The (y) Writers of Ecclesiastical story inform us, how careful Christians in the primitive times were, for the settling of Schools of Learning, in all places where Churches had been planted, that so there might be able instruments raised up for the propagating of Truth in succeeding Generations. And some have well & truly observed, that the Interest of Religion and good Literature, hath risen and fallen together. It was *Julians* policy to pull down Schools among Christians, that so he might destroy Religion: (z) concluding, that *the Cause that should not have an able Defendant would fall.* Therefore let there be a pious and earnest Solicitude about that matter. One of the famous Kings † in our Nation caused a Law to be Established, that all Parents should bring up their Children in Learning. I know there are good Laws among us respecting inferior Schools, though I doubt as to Execution there is great defect in that as well as in other matters. Let me also beseech you to endeavour that what concerns the *Colledge* may be Revived, and if it may be in the place where it formerly flourished, I have nothing to say against that, but much

(y) *Cent.* 2. c. 7. & 3. c. 7. (z) *Read Mr. Reiner of the necessity of Humane Learning for a Gospel Minister.* † *Elfred vide Clark. vol.* 1. *pag.* 173.

much for it rather; & that greater encouragement be given to those that labour as Tutors there. (a) That was propounded to this General Assembly four years agoe, by him that did then so faithfully declare the Counsel of God to this generation. I would gladly second a motion of that nature, as supposing that more of the Welfare of the uprising Generations is Concerned therein than many are aware of.

I remember it is noted concerning the learned *Chytraus*, that he prevailed with the Princes of *Megapol* to bestow 3500 Crowns of yearly Revenue upon the University of *Rostock*, by which means the interest of Religion was wonderfully promoved: And it was one of the usual wishes of that Excellent man, *Utinam Reges ac Potentes rerum Domini, majorem Ecclesiæ ac Scholarum curam susciperent.* O (said he) that Magistrates would be more careful to encourage Schools of Learning, and thereby promote the good of the Church. The Reformers did in this way, and by this means carry on the Interest of Religion, and propagate the Truth to after Ages. *Calvin* therefore perswaded the *Senate* of *Geneva* to erect an illustrious School in that City wherein the Tongues and Arts were taught, and from whence many worthy Instruments issued forth.

And

(a) *Mr. Oakes his Election Sermon pag.* 57.

And that excellent Prince *Cassimire* did the like at *Neostad*, where *Ursin* and *Zanchi* were sometimes professors. So the Senate of *Grunberg* erected a Colledge and chose the learned *Bucholtzer* to govern it. The like was done at *Herborn* by Prince *John* of *Nassau* at the perswasion of *Olevian*, where also *Piscator* taught and flourished. So at *Leyden* in Holland. And (not to mention more places) the same Course was taken at *Edinborough* in Scotland, of which Colledge that Famous and Holy man, Mr. *Rollock* was the first President and many Choice Instruments of God's glory have there been Educated. Wherefore let what concerns this matter, be among the chief of your Cares and Endeavours.

Further, I entreat you let it be your Care, that none but faithful ones (as far as men can judge) be employed as Publick Preachers: Though the just Liberty of Churches should not be infringed; yet that every Plantation in the Countrey should have Allowance to choose whom they please to labour in the publick Dispensation of the Word, may be in time a great Inlet to ignorance, error & profaness. Therefore let me humbly propound to you that you would think of some Expedient, respecting the Approbation of such as shall be under a constant improvement as Publick Teachers Yea, and that there be not any Place settled

without such. No doubt but one reason why the Lord hath let loose the Heathen against us hath been, because some Plantations have been erected and yet no publique acknowledgement of God amongst them, but they have lived like *Heathen*, without Sabbaths, without the Word and prayer, which are moral duties that all are bound to attend: and it is therefore incumbent on the Magistrates to see that they do so. People are ready to run wild into the woods again and to be as Heathenish as ever, if you do not prevent it. Take care also I beseech you for the propagation of the Gospel amongst these poor Indians: You know it is expressed in the *Patent*, as one main end proposed by our Fathers in their coming into this Wilderness, that so they might endeavour the Conversion of the Natives, and set up the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus among them. God by the late warr hath made way for the Gospel to be entertained amongst them, more than formerly; should not this be considered?

3. *I beseech you in the Name of the Lord, that you would in special manner beware of that which was the sin of Solomon*: and what was that? Truly sinful Toleration was Solomon's great Iniquity, whereby he did forsake the Lord. It is said of him, *he* built High places for *Ashteroth*, 2. King. 23. 13. because he did tolerate, and give publick allowance, unto those Idola-

Idolatries: and that ſin of his was the reaſon why the Lord ſtirred up Adverſaries againſt him. Do we not find that all the godly reforming Magiſtrates, ſpoken of in Scripture, thought it their Concern to pull down falſe worſhip, as well as to ſet up the true Worſhip of God. It is a moſt vain objection which ſome have made, That we do not read in the New Teſtament, that the Magiſtrate did ever puniſh any, on account of tranſgreſſion againſt the *firſt Table*: No more (ſaith *Calvin*) do we read in the New Teſtament that the Magiſtrate did ever puniſh men for murder, or other Crimes, does it therefore follow that he ought not ſo to doe? But therein it is ſaid that they ought to puniſh all evil doers, *Rom.* 13. 4. 1. *Tim.* 1. 9. And that Tranſgreſſions againſt the *firſt Table* are evil deeds, *Gal.* 5. 19. 20. *Phil.* 3. 2. 2. *Joh.* 10. 11.

Moreover, ſinful Toleration is an evil of exceeding dangerous conſequence: Men of Corrupt minds though they may plead for Toleration, and Cry up Liberty of Conſcience &c. yet if once they ſhould become numerous and get power into their hands, would perſecute more than they: So the *Donatiſts* [b] of old, and the German Anabaptiſts [c] in the laſt Age. And the Arminian

[b] *See Clarks Martyrology pag.* 89, 90.

[c] *Sleidan, lib.* 10. *pag.* 159.

Arminian Remonstrants † in the *Netherlands* made Hideous Clamours for *Liberty of Conscience*, and that the States of Holland were more cruel than the bloody Spanish Inquisitors, yet when they became potent, they did persecute the Orthodox Professors of the Truth. And indeed the Toleration of all Religions and Perswasions, is the way to have no true Religion at all left. That was *Julian* the Apostate's device, in order to an extirpation of Christianity. And it is a Solemn Word which Mr. *Cotton* (the first and famous Teacher in this Congregation) speaketh [*d*] *I wish* (saies he) *that Antichrist do not creep in at the back door of Tolleration*, I do believe that Antichrist hath not at this day a more probable way to advance his Kingdom of Darkness, than by a Tolleration of all Religions and Perswasions, Hence some of the chief of the Popish Doctors (*e*) have writen against the Magistrates power in matter of Religion. But remember I pray you how God hath punished this sin which

† *Voetius Disp. Vol.* 3. *pag.* 795. & 803. *Grotius de Pietat. Ordin. Holland.* (d) *Mr. Cotton's Bloudy Tenet washed. pag.* 192. (e) *Sic Becanus; Mariana, Harding contra Juellum. Hart in Rainoldum. Sic Bozzius et Rossaus, quos vide citatos apud Keckermanum in Polit. pag.* 983. *et Paraeum in Rom.* 13.

which I am teſtifying againſt. Of old (as ſome [f] have truly obſerved) when once the Roman Emperours did indulge and tolerate *Arians*, God was provoked to let the Barbarous *Goths* looſe to break in upon the Empire, and deſtroy it, ſo as that the Church fled into the Wilderneſs, and had like to have been ſwept away with that floud. And what miſery this ſin hath more than once brought upon our Land and Nation, I need not tell you. It is a very memorable Paſſage which I find related in the Life of that great learned *USHER*, when Popiſh Idolaters were by the Civil State allowed; *Well*, (ſaid that Worthy of his time) *you ſhall find that God will puniſh you forty years hence, by thoſe very men, whom you have ſinfully indulged*: And ſo it came to paſs; for juſt forty years after that, was the Iriſh Rebellion. This very ſin which God calls me to bear witneſs againſt this day hath been *ſubverſive* to the intereſt of Religion in ſome Chriſtian Nations. The Toleration of *Socinianiſme* has prooved the ruin of the Churches in *Poland* & *Tranſilvania*. Yet it is far from my deſign in ſpeaking this to ſtir up Magiſtrates to that which the Scripture calls *Perſecution*: it were better to err by *too much indulgence* towards thoſe that have *the root of the matter in them*, than by *too much Severity*. Nay, as to thoſe that are indeed

(f) *Strong Select Sermons. pag.* 263. 264.

indeed Heretical, I can for my own part say with Luther, *ad judicium sanguinis tardus sum*, I have no affection to *sanguinary* punishments in such Cases. And certainly there are other † wayes to suppress Hereticks besides *Hæretiside*, witness what was doneby great *Constantine* for the suppression of *Arianism*. Nevertheless, approved Writers who, are large enough in the point of *Toleration*, declare, that they, the principles of whose Religion are disturbant to the Civil State and Constitution of any place, may not be indulged, (and that therefore Popish Priests and Jesuits are not to be permitted) Sure then they whose Religion, and whose Profession doth warm in its bowels a fatal Engine, against the Kingdom and Churches of the Lord Jesus, ought not to be tolerated. Nor is it tolerable for *any sort* of men amongst us, to set up a *mount Gerizzim* that if these or those are *justly* cast out of the Churches of Christ, they shall be suffered to set up an *Altar against the* Lord's *Altar*, and (it may be) to take those hands that are in the Name of the Lord Jesus *delivered up to Satan*, I say, to take those hands to administer * the *dreadful misteries of the Kingdom*, it is an abomination enough to make desolate. Certainty (much honoured in the Lord) if

† *See Sr. Simond D'Ewes his Primitive Practice for preserving Truth. p. 6, 7.* * *Phrykta musteria.*

if your bleſſed Fathers and Predeceſſors were alive and in place, it would not be ſo; If † *Winthrop*, *Dudley*, *Endicot* were upon the Bench ſuch profaneneſs as this would ſoon be ſuppreſſed. And if it be ſo that the ſpirit of Rulers in New-England is changed, if you do become cold and indifferent in the things of God, departing from your former love, and zeal for the Name, Truth, and bleſſed Ordinances, of the Lord Jeſus, I will be bold to ſpeak to you, as once Mr. *Brightman* ſaid to a greater man than any of you all, *if it be ſo*, you may believe it, *God will change either* you, *or your* Government *ere long*. I ſpeak it to you with great ſolemnity of Spirit, and in the Name of *Him* that is Higher than the higheſt.

4. *Labour* (*I likwiſe pray you in the Name of the Lord*) *to the utmoſt of your power, that the work of Reformation may be promoted in this Generation.* I ſhall not need to inſiſt here, becauſe this Argument was abundantly and worthily enlarged on (*g*) by him that ſpake in the Name of the Lord on this occaſion three years agoe. Since that, the holy diſpenſations of God towards this people have been very dreadful, ſo that the Lord calls for Reformation now more than ever. If things ſhould paſs away

† *See New-England's Memorial. pag.* 140.

(*g*) *Mr. Torrey in his Election Sermon.*

away thus, and the Generation that is to come ſhould not ſee that ſome notable thing was done with reſpect to a Reformation of provoking evils, it would be ſad indeed; and the more ſad, in that there have been *Eſſays* this way: And ſince the late (and to this day not fully ended *War*) a Committee appointed by the General Court to enquire into the Cauſes of the high diſpleaſure of God which hath been manifeſted, and ſuch and ſuch evils concluded to be matters of Provocation, and Laws enacted for the ſuppreſſion of them, and ſhall it all come to juſt nothing at laſt? ſhall we dare ſo dally with the Almighty in things of this nature? The Lord may reſpite us for a while but, except there be a Reformation of provoking Evils, we have no reaſon to expect otherwiſe, but that *a worſe thing will come unto us*, and that He will puniſh us yet ſeven times for our ſins. And how is there like to be that Reformation which the Lord requires, except you that are Leaders over this people, doe your utmoſt to promote it? Where do you read of any great and general Reformation brought to paſs, except the civil Magiſtrate did forward it? It is true, that many times God doth make uſe of his Meſſengers and Miniſters to ſet the Wheel a going, but then Magiſtrates have fallen in with them. The Prophets *Haggai* and *Zachary* ſet the work of Reformation upon the wheel, but

Zerubbabel

Zerubbabel son of *Shealtiel* (that godly Magistrate) carried on the work to effect, *Ezra.* 5. 1, 2. Luther *began* the Reformation in Germany, yet if some of the Princes there had not engaged with him, the work had never been *carried on* with such success. † *Calvin* (and other eminent Ministers of God) *exhorted* the people at Geneva, unto Reformation, but if the *Senatours* of that place had not hearkened to the voice of God in those Exhortations, the people would have remained unreformed still. *Zwinglius* by his Ministry was instrumental towards the accomplishing a great Reformation in *Zurick*, but then the Magistrates of that place fell in with the Word of God. *Occolampadius* was an happy instrument in the hand of Christ to reform *Basil*; but if the Magistrates of that City had not set to *their* helping hand, Occolampadius *alone* might have laboured in vain. The like is to be said concerning the Reformation of *Bern*, (not to insist on more instances) where that learned *Hallerus* was once a Preacher of the Gospel. I know you cannot change mens hearts, yet you may doe much (if God help you) towards the effecting an outward Reformation, which will procure outward blessings and prevent outward Judgements and desolations. There

† *Read the lives of Luther, Calvin, Zuinglius, Occolampadius, Hallerus.*

There is pride in the hearts of men, you cannot Reform that, but there is pride in *Apparrel*, which the Lord has said he will punish for, you may cause *that* to be reformed. There is Drunkenness in the sight of God, which doth not fall under your Cognizance, but Drunkenness in the sight of men, and the occasions of it, do; which you may and ought to remove. I know not any evil that hath brought more misery upon this Generation than that hath, and some that have reason to know it, have told me that there hath been more Drunkenness among the Indians since this warr, than there was before: undoubtedly there is a fault somewhere, that good laws are not executed upon those that shall transgress in this kind, and that the Course propounded and enacted by the General Court for the suppressing of this growing evil is as not been duly attended. Again, as for scandalous contentions, you may doe much towards the healing of them. All the world knoweth that there hath been an unhappy breach between two of the Churches in this great Town; if every one of you that are in place, shall doe what you can, and what the Lord Jesus would have you doe, to help in this case, we may hope, that woful breach will (by the help of Christ) soon be healed, and much Sin and Judgement (that is otherwise like to follow) will be prevented. And the Lord calls aloud about this matter; The Burn-

ing

Burning which he hath kindled in this place, the voice of the Lord in it is, *out with your sinful fires, lest I give you burning for burning.* And since that, this Town hath been endangered more by fire than ever it was since the day I knew it. Therefore I come to you in the Name of the Lord, and beseech you to consider of this matter, lest the Lord kindle another fire in Boston ere long that shall burn to the Foundation of the Mounntains: And I do the rather mention this thing because the subject I am upon, leads me to it, the welfare of posterity being concerned therein, it may be the *sowre grapes* which the Fathers have eaten will set your Childrens teeth an edge. I remember blessed [g] Mr *Burroughs* in his *Irenicum* takes notice of it, that *it is very dangerous for the Children of the Church to be brought up in the sight of Divisions amongst Professours.* Was there not a young man (h) that came to a lamentable End in this Countrey who professed that the Divisions which he observed amongst godly men had occasioned his ruin? Let us remember that Scripture, *Jer.* 32. 39. I will give them *one heart* to fear me for the *good* of *them*, and of their *Children* after them. If there be a divided heart amongst Christians; and these Divisions appear openly; it is a wrong

[g] *Mr. Burroughs Irenicum pag.* 220.

[h] *Abraham Warner in Hartford.*

Wrong to their Children after them. The Lord help us to Conſider it.

And now I ſhall turn my Speech from you that are *Zerubbabels* among this people: I doubt not but you Conſider that I have ſpoken theſe things not as a friend only, but as in the capacity of an unworthy Ambaſſadour of the moſt High God unto you this day. And methinks my conſcience beareth me witneſs in the Holy Ghoſt, that an earneſt deſire that the will of God might be done hath cauſed me thus to expreſs my ſelf: As alſo a deſire that you might have Comfort both now and in *that day* when you muſt give up your account to the Son of God concerning your Stewardſhip, which in his Providence he hath entruſted you with; and that your Names might be honourably ſpoken of in the next Generation when you ſhall be in your Graves. It is no honour to Jehu's name that *in his daves God began to cut Iſrael ſhort* 2. *King.* 10. 32. Nor to *Jehoram* in that it is recorded to poſterity that *in his daves the Edomites revolted*, 2. *Chron.* 21. 18. Nor will it be for your Honour if the next Generation ſhall ſay, Once ſuch & ſuch Worthies and Patriots had the Management of Affairs in New-England, and in *their* daves things went well, God did bleſs, and build, and proſper the Land; but after they were gone the Work fell into other hands, and in *their*

their dayes there was trouble upon trouble, Warrs, Sicknesses, Sword Fire, Desolations in every Corner of the Land, for it *thus to be spoken* would not be for your Honour. But now that it should be said, though the Lord afflicted the Land for a while, you caused the people under your Charge to turn unto the Lord, and then God did own them and bless them more then ever, this will be to your honour amongst men in this world, and more to your Joy when you shall appear before Jesus Christ, than if Crowns of Diadems should be set upon your heads. The Lord grant it may be so.

2. Let me humbly propose this Exhortation to those that are Ministers in the House of God. There are many such before the Lord in this great Assembly;

My Fathers and Brethren, The Generation that is Present, and that which is to come will bless God for us, if we doe our utmost to promote their Welfare; We are many of us eminently *the Children of the Prophets.* The Prophets *do they live for ever, and our Fathers where are they?* They are now in Heaven beholding the Glory of Jesus Christ; And the Lord Jesus who sometimes said to the Angels of the Churches *I know your works*, speaketh to us saying, the great affairs of my Kingdom which once were in the Hands of your Fathers to Manage, are now come into your hands,

they were faithful to my Name, and did acquit themselves as became them, now let me see what you will doe: Follow them as they followed Christ. Give me leave to mention two or three words, which if the Lord help us to Remember them, we shall serve our Generation according to the will of God.

1. *Let us approve our selves faithful in what Concerns the House of God.* And therefore we ought to be Careful who are admitted there. tho' others are also concerned therein, yet in a more peculiar manner *that matter belongs to us.* We are in (respect of sacred Office relation before the Lord) *Porters* that have the Charge of his House; and we are solemnly charged, *Ezek.* 44. (it is a Scripture that concerns Ministers of the New Testament) not to bring into the Lords Sanctuary uncircumcised in heart to be in the Sanctuary to pollute it, and to eat the Bread of God there. Indeed as for those whom God hath admitted into his House (in any degree) by any Rule of his, we must not turn them out till the Lord doe it. But that which I intend is the Admission of persons into full Communion, we know what our Fathers have Taught concerning that matter, *viz.* that there ought to be an Holding forth Faith and Repentance before Admission to the Lords Table and it is well said by [illegible] blessed

blessed Mr. *Mitchel* [i] that *Laxness in this Point would be a real Departure from our former Profession*. Yet I wish there be not Teachers found in our Israel, that have espoused looser Large Principles here, Designing to bring all Persons to the Lords Supper, who have an historical Faith, and are not Scandalous in Life, altho' they never had Experience of a work of Regeneration on their souls, and live in the neglect of secret Duties, wherein the Life and Power of Godliness especially consists. Now this would corrupt Churches and ruin all in a little time. The [k] neglect of this Principle of Truth, that such Members of the Church as are admitted to full Communion, ought to be Regenerate Converted Persons, the Non-attendance unto that did (as a worthy, Divine of our own hath well noted) lay a Foundation to great Apostasie, which the Christian Church hath been long subject unto. Again, if we would be faithful as to what concerns the House of God, we must endeavour that the Building thereof be carried on to Perfection. As David in this Context speaks to Solomon, *Take heed now for the Lord hath chosen thee to build an house for a Sanctuary, be strong and do it*. So has the Lord been pleas'd to chuse us

[i] *In Answer to Apol. preface pag. ult.*
[k] *Dr. Owen de Theol. l. 6. c. 8. p. 504.*

us to be employed in building his house, which has not been carried on to the desired perfection. Our Fathers did like *David*, he prepared Materials for the Temple and then left it to his son to go on with the building 1. *Sam.* 22. 5. 14. So did our Fathers leave us Principles of Truth, which they did with much cost and paihs, dig out of the Rich veins of the Scripture. We have need therefore to be much in prayer, and Humiliations before the Lord that so he might vouchsafe to show us the Form of the House and the Fashion thereof, and the Goings *out* thereof, and the Comings *in* thereof.

2. *Let us make* Converting work *our main design*. Shall we be content to goe to Heaven *alone*, and not strive to carry as many of the Generation we live in, along with us as possibly we can? Alas, Apostasie will prevail, and these Churches cannot be kept pure long except *Converting work* goe forward. O therefore let us Preach for this, and Pray for this, and study for this, that precious immortal souls may be converted to God through Jesus Christ. And to this end it will be good for us to attend personal instruction of those under our Charge, as far as time & strength will permit us. I remember it's noted in the *Lives of Chrysostom* and *Austin*, that besides their publique Labours, they did sometimes attend personal instruction of these and those of their Hearers

Hearers. When the Miniſters * in *Geneva* did agree to divide the City ſo as to call each Family to an account concerning their Faith, more good was done thereby, than by all their Publick Teachings. And ſome [*l*] of latter time have been bleſſed with eminent ſucceſs as to Converſion of ſouls, ſo as that whole Towns where they have lived have been wonderfully changed upon taking this courſe. I know that where there is but one Elder in a Church (as alas that is now the caſe of theſe Churches generally) ſo much cannot be done that way as is to be deſired; yet if we doe as much as we can, the Lord Jeſus will accept of it, and it may be, ſucceſs will be beyond expectation. Many an one that minds not a ſermon, yet when he is by a Meſſenger of God particularly ſpoken to, and told, you are yet in your ſins; if you be not *new* born, better you had *never* been born; he falls down under Conviction. And poſſibly words that we little think any ſuch thing of now, will be mentioned again to our exceeding joy and rejoycing in the day of Chriſt, when we ſhall ſee and hear many ſouls ſtand forth and bleſs the Lord Jeſus that ever they knew us, and that ever we ſpake to them in the Name of the Lord both publickly and

* *Refertur in vita Calvini.* [l] *Mr. Joſeph Alleins life, with Mr. Baxters Preface. Ames Caſ. Conſ. Lib. 4 Cap. 26.*

and privately; even in the day when each of us that hath been faithful in his generation shall say, *Lord here am I, and the Children that thou hast given me*. Moreover, if we would Convert souls and be Blessings indeed to this generation, it concerns us to be very careful of our personal conversation, and what examples we set before others. If we do not live Sermons as well as preach them we are not likely to doe any great good. For a Minister of Christ to be a [m] Merchant and entangle himself with the Affairs of this life, against the express charge of the Holy Ghost; or for them to be Gospel Lawyers, to handle the *Code* instead of the Bible, and study the Statutes of the Land instead of the Statutes of Heaven; for them to appear as Advocates, and plead Causes in civil Courts of Judicature it is very uncomely. One of the Ancients observes that *Sacerdos in Foro, et Mercator in Templo*. is not to be tolerated. Certainly such preachers are not likely to be instruments of turning many to Righteousness. Much more do they hinder the Conversion of souls, that shall call themselves Ministers of Christ, and ye

[m] *See* Dr. *Tuckney on Exod.* 28. 36. *pag.* 429. *And* Dr. *Fuller Holy State, pag.* 268. *And Greenhil on Ezek.* 42. *pag.* 334. *and Mr.* Dury *in his Discourse on that Question, How far a Minister of the Gospel may engage himself in civil Affairs.*

yet be of a ſcandalous Converſation. When the Prophets of Jeruſalem are light Perſons, Profaneneſs goeth forth into all the Land. I have read ſomewhere of one that was grievouſly tempted to Atheiſm on this account: For, (ſaid that poor Creature) *I live under a Miniſter that will preach good Sermons, but his converſation is not according thereunto; he will be drunk ſometimes, and ſecretly vile and laſcivious, and therefore how can I believe that there is any God or Devil, Heaven or Hell, or any ſuch thing?* An evil Example in ſuch an one is enough to make thoſe of the Generation amongſt whom he liveth to become Atheiſts.

3. *Oh! that our occaſional meetings might be improved for the good of this, and after-generations.* Becauſe of the Capacity and holy Relation we ſtand in before the Lord, it is expected we ſhould not be like other men, they may meet together & ſpend the time in diſcourſes of their own perſonal Concerns; but we have the care and Charge of ſouls committed to us: Yea, (in our meaſure) the Care of all the Churches ought to be upon us: Nay more, we muſt be ſolicitous for thoſe that ſhall come after us. Such a publick Spirit well becomes our publick Capacity, and therefore upon all occaſions to ſpeak and act accordingly. And verily the Lord will write down theſe diſcourſes in his Book of Remembrance, and we

ſhall

shall be glad to hear of them again *at that day*. We must every one of us (Ministers as well as People) appear in a greater congregation than this, and then we shall not be sorry that we have laid our selves out for God and for his People; yea, the more we have done for Christ and for the Generation wherein we live, the greater will our glory be when we shall hear the Lord Jesus saying, *Well done* thou faithful servant, enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord.

If the Lord help us to approve our selves faithful unto the Death, when he the chief Shepherd shal appear, he will give unto us a Crown of Glory which fadeth not away.

Let me in the last place direct my speech and Exhortation in the Name of the Lord unto the People of this Land. There are here present those that are *Deputed* to act in the Name and stead of the people of this Jurisdiction. You have a great opportunity put into your hands by the providence of God to doe service for this and after generations, *viz.* by endeavouring the establishment of righteous and religious Lawes in the Common-Wealth, that so the Lord Jesus might reign there. Especially let me propound to you, that you would take some effectual course that good Laws which are already established may be duly executed: And that some further care might

might be taken for the suppressing of that wickedness that is usually committed the night after the Sabbath, God hath lately kindled a fire in this place, & it was on the night after the Sabbath, why should we wonder at it? I cannot speak it without some Anguish of Spirit, there is more wickedness committed usually on that night, than in all the week besides. Therefore think of some expedient to help in this case. Let me also mention another thing to you, I have formerly upon a solemn occasion mentioned it to the Honoured Magistracy, and therefore now apply my self to you; it is this. that you would recommend unto the Churches in this colony, a solemn Renewal of their Covenant with God & one another. That is a great Scripture Expedient for Reformation. Do not think that this is any new Notion, but it is a known Principle owned * and avowed by the good old Non-Conformists (whose children we are) That *Renewal of Covenant is the way to attain Church Reformation*: which Principle was much Improved by the chief of the Fathers in these *New-English* Churches also; (and therefore I the rather insist upon it) this is the way to prevent Apostasie. The Covenant was renewed in the dayes of Joshua, when as the Scripture testifies that in his dayes the Children of Israel Continued to serve

* *Cartwright, Parker, Ames, &c.*

ſerve the Lord, wherefore Divines obſerve, that Joſhua's ſpecial Deſign in putting the people upon Renewing their Covenant, was that ſo they might be kept from future Apoſtaſie. I do therefore in the Name of the Lord, commend this matter to you, and leave it with you, and God encline your hearts to doe that which ſhall be pleaſing in his ſight. And if the Lord intend not further ſhakings and deſolations amongſt theſe Churches, I am perſwaded that this Motion will be harkned unto and Complied with.

Moreover, there are many others of the people of the Land here, before the Lord this day, a conſiderable part of the preſent Generation is met together in this great Aſſembly; A few words let me ſpeak to you. and leave with you, that ſo you may not forſake the Lord, the God of your Fathers.

1. *Let us labour to be rightly informed reſpecting Principles which our Fathers owned.* There are Miſtakes in the minds of ſome who think that the Fathers of this Colony, affirmed thus and ſo, albeit it was far from them ſo to teach, or ſo to think. I ſhall not (being now in earneſt, and deſirous to ſpeak with utmoſt Solemnity) enter upon things which are more Controverſal amongſt us, but certain it is, that our Fathers alwaies owned and avowed this

this principle of Truth, *That nothing should be admitted into the Worship of God but what there is Scripture Warrant for, nor any thing neglected which the Lord hath Instituted.* The Cause of the Second Commandment was that which our Fathers were engaged in the Defence of. And as to Church Administrations, *That things should be reduced to the Primitive, Apostolical pattern.* An excellent principle, albeit, that blessed Martyr † Mr. *Laurence Saunders* was accused of Heresie for asserting it. And I remember that learned man and blessed Martyr *Peter Ramus* professeth in one of his Epistles that the deep consideration of this principle * *that the Apostolical age was the golden age of the Church, and that things should be regulated according to what was then practised in the Churches of Christ*, caused him to become a Protestant, yea, and for the *Congregational way* of Church Government. and indeed the *Congregational way truly stated*, is that which our Fathers have stedfastly owned and avowed, that is to say as it is held forth in the Platform of Discipline, and by Mr *Cotton* in his Book of *the Keyes*; they were not for Presbyterianism, nor yet for Brownism. Remember blessed Mr. *Norton*'s last words in this place, and under this Roof.

Secondly

† *Clarke's Lives, pag.* 493. * *vide Petri Rami Epist. ad Cardinal. Lotharingum. pag.* 256, 257.

2. *Keep up the power of Discipline in Churches.* When Apostasie prevailed in the Asiatick Churches, *there* was the original wound, they did not brandish the Sword of Discipline, which is Christs own Expedient, and appointment for the preservation of Churches in purity; yea, this was a fatal Neglect, which by degrees proved ruinous to those once famous and glorious Churches. Some learned * men have well observed, that the Neglect of Discipline in the Churches of Asia brought in corruption of manners, and Corruption of Manners was (through the just revenging hand of God) attended with Corruption of Doctrine, and these together provoked the Lord to lay those Churches most desolate. And as for the Children of the Covenant, let Discipline be extended towards them, according as they are subjects capable thereof. Did not our Fathers come hither in hope that they should leave their children under the Discipline and Government of the Lord Jesus in his Church? Hath not Christ owned the application of solemn publick Admonitions, &c. to some of them that have been Children of the Church, (tho not in full Communion) even so as to convert their souls thereby? why then should disputes about the mode wholly evacuate the Thing, when so much of the wel-

* *Voetius alicubi inter Disputationes.*

welfare of ſouls and the intereſt of Chriſt's Kingdom is concerned therein.

3. *Look to your Families.* Families are the Nurſeries for Church and Common-Wealth, ruine Families and ruine all. Order them well & the Publick State will fare the better. The great wound & miſery of *New-England* is that Families ‖ are out of order. As to the generality of Houſe-holders, Family-Government is loſt and gone; Servants do not fear their Maſters, children do not honour their Parents, in that reſpect the Engliſh are become like unto the *Indians*. Let Chriſtians make conſcience of it as their Duty, to rule their own Houſes well, and be careful that Family Inſtruction be upheld; the Judgment of God ſhould awaken to this. In ſome Families the Children have no Father left to inſtruct them in other Families Fathers have no Children left, to be inſtructed by them; by theſe terrible Judgements they that have Families ſhould learn to be diligent in Inſtructing of them, whilſt they have an opportunity ſo to doe: And this is the way to prevent Apoſtaſie: For Ignorance is the Mother (not of Devotion but) of HERESY. Uſually they that prove Hereticks, are ſuch as were never thoroughly grounded in the Knowledge of

‖ *Read Mr. Stockton of Family Inſtruction.*

of principles, never well instructed in Catechetical Fundamental Doctrines and points of Religion. The *Waldenses* * preserved and propagated the Interest of Religion by diligence in catechising their Children. When certain Jesuits were sent among them to entice them from the Truth to Idolatry, they returned amazed, professing that Children of seven years old amongst those *Waldenses* knew more in the Scripture, and of the Misteries of the Gospel, than many of their learned Doctors did. Take heed also how you dispose of your Children, you that are parents look at Religion and the fear of God in the Disposal of your Children. That blessed man Mr. *Doa* (the Moses of his time) would sometimes bewail it, that Professours of Religion would say, *There is a* Portion *and* Civility, *and we will have for Grace*; *but* (said he) *rather make sure of Grace, and hope for Riches, there is far greater reason for it, since Godliness hath the Promises, Riches have none.* It may make us dread to think what's coming, in that it is with us as it was with the old World, the Sons of God are marrying with the Daughters of men. Church Members in disposing of their Children look more at *Portion* than at *Piety*: If their Children are like to live well in the World, and their Families to be made richer, they look no

* *Read the history of the Waldenses.*

no further; a sad sign that Religion will expire, and such Families be cut off from the Covenant, within a few Generations, and the branches thereof perish for ever.

4. *Pray with all manner of prayer & supplication in the Spirit.* Pray as sometimes the Martyr did, *Lord do not thou forsake me, lest I forsake thee.* Pray for your poor Children and posterity: as David did for his son Solomon 1. *Chron.* 29. 19. *give unto my son Solomon a perfect heart.* He did not only exhort and charge his Son to labour after such an heart, but earnestly *prayed* to God, that such an heart might be given to him. And truly, if there were more prayers poured forth before the Lord for the Converting of the *rising Generation*, we may hope that there would a blessed Effect follow. I have been told that there is a Church in N. England that hath set dayes apart only to seek unto the Lord, for converting grace to be vouchsafed to their Children. O that all other Churches would do as they have done, even seek unto the Lord by Fasting and prayer, for a poor, perishing, dying, unconverted Generation.

5. And Lastly. *Be faithful in improving of your Civil Liberties.* Beware of two Extreams, of an *Issacharian Spirit*, to couch under every Imposer: If you foolishly lose your *Liberties*,

your Posterity, yea the Children that are yet to be born will rue it. Beware also of a *wanton Spirit*, lest you provoke the Lord by bitter Bondage to make you know the worth of Liberty. It is a great Priviledge which you enjoy at this day, that you may choose Rulers from among your selves. And although as to what concerns the Transactions of this day, it is almost too late to speak, yet you may hear for the time to come. *Freemen*, remember the oath of God that is upon you. I doubt there is lamentable guilt upon many, who in *Elections* are acted more by interest and Faction than by conscience. You know what the Rule is, viz. that you should Choose men that are just, and that fear God and hate Covetousness. Choose men that shall aprove themselves (like *Eliakim*) Fathers to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Choose men of Hezekiah's Spirit, who *spake comfortably to all those that taught the good knowledg of the Lord.* In a word, choose those that will be zealous for the interest of Reformation, and that therefore will improve their power to suppress Transgressions of the first, as well as of the *2nd.* Table. If you will choose such (which mercy forbid that ever it should be) under whose shaddow Thorns and Briars shall thrive, and those Weeds of *Pride*, *contention*, *Heresie* shall receive Nourishment, and Encouragement; it will be an Ominous

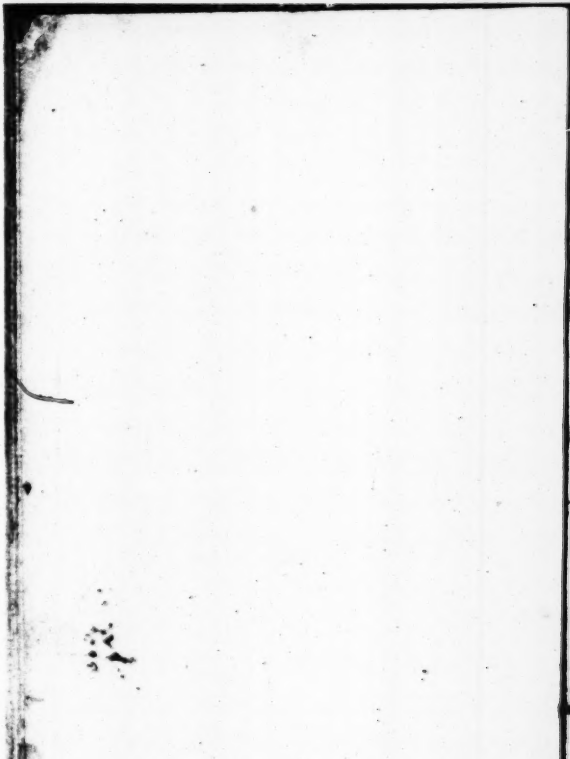
sign

sign that God will ere long deprive you of your *Liberties* until such time as you know better how to improve them.

And now I hope I may say that as to the opportunity put into my hands this day, I have discharged my Conscience, delivered my soul, and can lay down my head with peace. I conclude with *Moses*, Calling Heaven and Earth to record, that *life* and *death* hath been set before this Generation. O Generation see the Word of the *Lord*, choose *Life* that both thou & thy seed may live. And *God* from Heaven saith, O that there were such an heart in this generation that they would fear me, that so it may go well with *them*, and with their *children* for Ever,

AMEN.

Tres Domine.



ECCLES. XII. 1.

Remember now thy Creator in the dayes of thy youth.

SOlomon in this Context doth apply himſelf to ſpeak unto *Young* men, whom he doth, 1. Dehort. 2. Exhort.

His Dehortation is in the two laſt verſes of the former Chapter. And it is

1. Ironically propounded ver. 9. *Rejoyce O young man in thy youth &c.* It is ſuch another form of Speech as that of the Prophet unto *Ahab* 1. King. 22. 15. *Go and proſper.* * He ſaw that Ahab was ſet upon his deſign, and therefore by way of Irony bids him go and ſee what would come of it. Thus Solomon here, I ſee young man (ſaith he) that thou art reſolved to follow thy pleaſures and vanities, whatever the event ſhall be, doe ſo, and ſee what will come of it. Wherefore he adds *Walk in the waies of thine heart, and in the ſight of thine eyes.* This is expreſly forbiden elſewhere in the Scripture, † A clear evidence that the wiſe man here ſpeaks by way of holy deriſi-

* *Cartwright in Eccl.* 11. 9. † *Mercer in loc.*

derision, and thence it is further added, *know thou that for these things, God will bring thee to Judgment.* q. d. Though its possible thou mayst escape Judgment from men, parents, Magistrates, &c. yet not from the Lord.

2. This Dehortation is plainly expressed in the verse immediatly preceding this Text, *Remove sorrow from thy heart.* The Hebrew word translated *Sorrow*, signifieth *Anger*: q. d. Beware of inordinate passions, which young men are usually subject unto: *And put away evil from thy flesh*, h. e. avoid sinful pleasures. Passions and sinful pleasures are evils which young men are most in danger of being carried away by; therefore he doth in special caution them against iniquities of that nature: withal adding this reason, *for Childhood and Youth are vanity*, h. e. its soon gone, thy time (young man) to enjoy sinful and foolish pleasures will soon be past & gone, it abideth not, therefore set not thy heart upon such things.

2. We have Solomons *Exhortation* unto young men in this verse: wherein is expressed 1. The fact that ought to be done, *Remember*. 2. The Object, *thy Creator*. i. e. God, for he, and he only is the CREATOR; since it requireth an infinite power to be able to produce a work of Creation. Hebr. *Remember thy Creators*. Not that there are more Gods of more Creators than one. For there is a plurality of Persons in the Godhead. Though the work

of

of Creation be more especially ascribed to the Father, as Redemption to the Son, and aplication to the Spirit, yet each of the Persons in the Sacred and Eternal Trinity, doth concur therein. 3. The *Time* or Seaſon, when this Duty ought to be attended *is* expreſſed. viz. *now, in the dayes of thy youth.* not that they that are paſt the dayes of their youth may forget God, or be exempted from this Remembrance of him, but *young* men are under ſpecial *obligations* and Advantages to remember Him.

Doctr. That *as it is the duty of* all, *ſo more eſpecially of* young *men to remember God their Creator.* Remembring God may not be deferred until old age, but ought to be attended in the dayes of youth.

In the Doctrinal proſecution of this Truth, there are three things to be enquired into, 1. What is implied in this Remembring. 2. How it doth appear that young men ought to remember God. 3. The Reaſon Why *they* eſpecially ſhould do ſo.

Queſt. 1. *What is implied in this Remembring which the Text ſpeaks of?*

Anſw. It is a known Rule, that in Scripture Words of Senſe doe imply the affections and actions. So here, it is not every kind of Remembrance of God, but that which is affectionate and practical, that is intended. Particularly,

1. *This Remembring doth Imply, a Turning to the Lord.* Psal. 22. 27. *All the ends of the world shall* remember *and* turn *to the Lord.* Unfeigned Repentance is Implied in this Remembrance. *Rev.* 2. 5. *Remember from whence thou art fallen and* repent. *Ezek.* 6. 9. *They that escape of you shall* remember *me among the Nations.* h. e. They shall repent and return to the Lord. And it is a penitential Remembrance which Solomon here speaketh of. Remember thy Creator, that is, remember to make thy peace with him, and therefore to repent of Sin, and to turn to God in the dayes of thy youth.

2. This Remembrance which the *Text* speaketh of doth imply Service and Obedience. *Psal.* 119. 55. *I have remembred thy name, and have kept thy Law.* As they that neglect the Worship and service which they owe to the blessed God, are said to forget him, *Psal.* 9. 17. *The wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations that* forget God. that is to say, *they that do not serve God.* When the Children of Israel had forsaken the wayes and Corrupted the Worship of God, it was said, *Israel hath* forgotten *his Maker. Hos.* 8. 14. So on the other hand, The Service of God is noted by that of Remembring him. *Remember thy Creator in the dayes of thy youth; h. e.* Seek and Serve him betimes. As David exhorted his son Solomon whilst yet in his youth, 1. *Chron.* 28. 9.

Know and serve the Lord with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind. Hence the performance of all Religious duties, especially that great duty of Prayer, is implied in this Remembring which the Text speaketh of *Jonah* 2. 7. *I remembred the Lord* (saith the Prophet) and how was that? it follows, *my prayer came unto thee into thine holy Temple.* We read in the Gospel, of *children* that prayed unto the Lord, they said *Hosanna*, i. e. *save now we beseech thee Mat.* 21. 15. That is implied in Remembring God the Creator.

3. *It doth also Imply Frequent thoughts and Meditations of God.* Psal. 63. 6. *When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.* Where there is that Remembrance of God which the Text requireth, there are frequent holy Meditations on him day and night. As Solomon exhorts *Prov.* 23. 17. *Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.* Set God before thine eyes; where-ever thou comest think of him from morning unto night, ever and anon. let there be awful holy thoughts in thy heart concerning the Omnipresence of God. And this is to remember him. We come therefore to the second thing to be enquried into, *viz.*

Quest. 2. *How doth it appear that young men ought to remember God?*

Answ. 1. The Lord doth require this, the Commandment saith expresly *Luk.* 10. 27.

Thou

Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy ſoul, and with all thy ſtrength. If men are bound to ſerve God with their ſtrength, then they muſt not forget him until thoſe dayes are come wherein their ſtrentgh is gone, and they able to do him little ſervice. Of old, God required that the firſt born, and the firſt Fruits ſhould be given to him, *Exod.* 22. 29. *Thou ſhalt not delay to offer the firſt of thy ripe fruit, the firſt born ſhalt thou give unto me.* This did intimate that men ought to give the prime of their Age, the firſt and beſt of their ſtrength unto the Lord.

2. The Truth of this Doctrine is evident in that Parents are bound to teach their Children the fear of the Lord whilſt they are young *Deut.* 6. 6, 7. *The words which I command thee, thou ſhalt teach them diligently unto thy Children,* Again, it is ſaid, *Train up a Child in the way he ſhould go, and when he is old he will not depart from it,* Prov. 22. 6. To the ſame purpoſe is that of the Apoſtle. *Eph.* 6. 4. *Ye fathers bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* And according unto this hath been the practice of Saints. The Lord himſelf doth teſtifie concerning Abraham that he would *command his children to keep the wayes of the Lord Gen.* 18. 19. And Solomon doth acknowledge that his father David was careful to inſtruct him, and put him in mind of God, whilſt he was yet in the dayes of his youth, *Pro.* 4. 3, 4.

I was my fathers ſon, he taught me, and ſaid unto me, let thine heart retain my words. Yea, not only his father but his mother alſo taught him the fear of the Lord. *Cap. ult.* 1, 2. *The words of King Lemuel, the Propheſy that his mother taught him, what my Son? and what the Son of my womb? and what the Son of my vows?* Now. to what end were it to teach Children and young ones to fear the Lord, if they were not bound to learn and doe accordingly.

3. Young men as well as others owe ſervice unto God; He is their Creator as the Text expreſſeth. Now that one Conſideration has great weight in it to enforce duty and obedience. For certainly all owe ſervice unto *him*, from whom they have received their Beings, *Pſal.* 95. 6. *O come let us worſhip and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.* HE hath made all for himſelf, from him and for him are all things. He, as Creator hath given unto men reaſonable ſouls in reſpect whereof they are capable of knowing and ſerving the Lord: and he is able to deſtroy them: He that made them can deſtroy them; as it is ſaid concerning that creature, *He that made him, can cauſe his ſword to approach unto him.* Job 40. 19. Therefore it concerns men to fear their Creator.

But to proceed to the third Particular, *namely*,

Queſt. 3. *Why ought young men eſpecially to remember their Creator?*

Anſw.

Anſw. For *theſe* (amongſt other) Reaſons,

REAS. 1. Becauſe Youth is the fitteſt ſeaſon to remember God in: Wherefore it is added in the Context. *Whilſt the evil dayes come, when thou ſhalt ſay I have no pleaſure in them.* Old Age is an evil Time: And therefore (ſaith the *Wiſe man*) thou muſt remember and ſerve God in thy *good* dayes, if thou wouldeſt have him to remember and accept of thee in thy evil dayes: if thou neglecteſt God in the *Spring* of thy years, what reaſon is there to think that he will regard thee when *Winter*-Age is come upon thee? Moreover it is not eaſie to turn unto the Lord in old age: A young Plant is more eaſily pluck'd up than an old Tree; So are young men with leſs Difficulty tranſplanted and plucked up out of the Soyl of Nature, than they that are grown old in the wayes of Sin. Old diſeaſes are hardly cured: ſo when men by a long Continuance in a Courſe of Sin have contracted almoſt incurable Habits of Sin, how hard a work will it be to convert them! were it not that *all things with God are poſſible*, it could not be. Wherefore the Scripture ſaith, *Can the Æthiopian change his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots? then may you alſo doe good that are accuſtomed to doe evil. Jer.* 13. 23. When Satan hath held poſſeſſion a long time, it is not an eaſie work to caſt him and diſpoſſeſs him, wee read of one in the Goſpel that had a moſt terrible Diſpoſ-

ſeſſion

Diſpoſſeſſion, *Mark* 9. 25. 26. *Jeſus rebuked the foul ſpirit, ſaying, I charge thee come out of him, and enter no more into him, and the Spirit cried, and rent him ſore, and came out of him, and he was as one dead, in ſo much that many ſaid, he is dead.* How difficult and how painful was this Diſpoſſeſſion! Why? *ver.* 21. it is noted that the Father of that young man being enquired of, how long he had been in that Condition he ſaid, *of a Child.* Truly they that ſpend their Childhood in the ſervice of Satan, if ever they be Converted are wont to have dreadful Converſions at laſt. Therefore young men ſhould turn to God betimes, that ſo they may eſcape thoſe bitter pangs, which otherwiſe they muſt expect to undergoe if ever Good come of them.

Reaſ. 2. From the Good and Benefit which doth follow upon Remembring and Turning to God betimes: As it is ſaid *Lam.* 3. 27. *It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his Youth.* So it is good for a man to turn to God, and to put his neck under *his* yoke in his youth. It was the Saying of one, that *if it were lawful for him to envy the happineſs of any, he would envy the happineſs of thoſe that turn to God betimes:* becauſe they are free'd from a world of Sin and Sorrow, which otherwiſe they would become ſubject unto. And this is the way to become eminent for God. There is a wretch-

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wretched Proverb in the World *viz. That a young Saint will prove an old Devil.* I remember *Erasmus* saith, the Devil was the Author of that Proverb: For nothing can be more contrary to the Scripture. The most eminent Saints that we read of there, were such as did remember God in the dayes of their youth. As now, *Joseph* proved an eminent good man; there is reason to think that all Jacobs children were good men before they dyed, but none of them to be compared with Joseph: and tho' he were the youngest but one, yet it seems evident that he was converted before any of his brethren who were older than he. Job was an eminent Saint, not a man upon the face of the whole earth so good as he; and Job was one that made conscience of his wayes even from his *Youth*, Cap. 31. 18. David was a man that attained a great measure of grace before he died, & he was godly even from his *Childhood*: Therefore doth he spake as in *Psa.* 71. 5. *Thou art my hope O Lord God, thou art my trust from my youth.* and again, *ver.* 17. *O God thou hast taught me from my* youth, *and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.* So that David had faith in Christ, and was savingly taught of God even from his youth. Obadiah was

|| *In pietate juven.*
Angelicus Juvenis, senibus Satanisat in annis.
vide Heidfeldii *sphing. Philosoph. pag.* 395.

was an eminent servant of God, and he could say, *I fear the Lord from my* youth 1. *King.* 18. 12. Josiah was eminent for God, and of him we read, that *while he was* young *he began to seek after the Lord God of David his Father.* He was truly converted when he was but sixteen years old, 2. *Chron.* 34. 3. Timothy was an eminent Minister and, (as Ecclesiastical story reports) at last he died a Martyr of Jesus Christ; now he was savingly acquainted with the holy Scriptures [*apo brephous*] *from a little child* 2. *Tim.* 3. 15. Thus we see how God has owned and blessed those that have remembred their Creator in the dayes of their *youth.* And for that reason young men should remember God.

Ref. 3. Young men are subject to the stroke of death as wel as others *Job* 21. 23. *One dieth in his full strength.* The young man of *Nain* whom Christ restored to life, notwithstanding his youth, was subject to Death, *Luk.* 7. 14. And Jairus's daughter was but about 12 years of age, when she lay a dying *Chap.* 8. 42. Was not Eutichus a *young man?* and yet he fell down from an upper Chamber and was taken up *dead*, Act. 20. 9. Were not Job's Children young men? and yet they died suddenly. Was not Absalom a young man, and his brother Adonijah a young man when death surprised them? Did not Eli's sons die in the flower of their Age? 1. Sam. 2. 23. Now

if

if young men remember their Creator ſo as to repent of ſin, and make ſure of an intereſt in Chriſt before death cometh, then happy ſhall they be. As Jeroboams good ſon tho' he were a child he died, 1. *King.* 14. 17. but inaſmuch as in him there was *found ſome good thing toward the Lord God of Iſrael*, death did him no hurt, only he was taken away from the evil to come, that his eyes might not behold the miſerable ruin that was coming upon his Father's Family. But if death find a young man in his ſins, in an unconverted Chriſtleſs eſtate woe to him that ever he was born! his naked ſoul muſt appear before God his Creator, and receive a Sentence of eternal Damnation.

USE. I proceed therefore to improve this Truth by way of Exhortation, *O let young men this day be exhorted in the Name and fear of God to follow the Counſel of the wiſe man, even to remember their Creator in the dayes of their youth.* All you young men that are here before the Lord (and there are many ſuch in this aſſembly) hear me this day, that ſo God may hear you another day, *now* turn to the Lord, *now* repent of ſin, *now* make ſure of an intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt: And therefore lay to heart ſome motives and perſwatives.

Mot. 1. *Conſider what ſpecial Reaſons there are of the younger riſing generation in England have to remember their Crea-*

is cause for it more than ever, in that there are so few that doe so. Multitudes of young men are risen up in this Land, who have been forgetting God all their dayes; unto whom the Lord may say as Jer. 22. 21. *This hath been thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyedst not my voice.* And as it was said concerning them of old *the Children of Israel, and the Children of Judah have only done evil before me from their youth* Jer. 32. 30. It is true, there are some young ones that are remembring and turning to the Lord, which ought to be acknowledged to the praise of his glorious grace, yet it must be said with Lamentation, that the generality of the youth in this Land, walk in wayes of Loosnes, Profaneſs, Pride, Drinking, Gaming, or in a careleſs neglect of God, and of their own souls. Hence the Lord doth not seem to take pleasure in many of the youth of this Countrey O it is a sad word that is spoken Isai. 9. 17. *The Lord shall have no Joy in their young men.* How many young men even in *New-England* that have been cut off either by Sword or Sickneſs within theſe two years! Now, shall the Lord have cause to complain as he doth by the Prophet (*Amos* 4. 10.) *Your young men have I slain with the Sword yet have you not returned unto me.* Moreover, young men in this Countrey enjoy means of Grace plentifully dispenſed, God is calling from Heaven to them, and striving with them in the

dayes

dayes of their youth and therefore if they forget him they will be left moſt inexcuſable before his judgment ſeat. Yea and many are the Children of Godly Parents, and in that reſpect under peculiar engagements to ſeek * and ſerve the Lord, who is not only their Creator, but the God of their Fathers, their God not only by right of Creation, but in reſpect of his holy Covenant.

2. *Conſider how pleaſing it will be to the Lord if you doe indeed remember him in the dayes of your* Youth. *Jer.* 2. 2. *I remember the kindneſs of thy youth.* You heard but now how the Lord is pleaſed with firſt-fruits. When *Abel brought of the firſtlings of his flock, --- the Lord had reſpect to Abel and his offering. Gen.* 4. 4. We read alſo how the Lord choſe the Almond tree, *Numb.* 17. 8. now thats the firſt tree that Bloſſoms. The fruit of it is ripe in the ſpring, † Yea (Writers affirm, in the firſt moneth of the

* *See the firſt Sermon* 1. *Chron.* 28. 9. † *The Hebrew word for an Almond tree is* Shaked, *which cometh from a verb ſignifying to make haſte,* Jer. 1. 11. *becauſe that tree above all others maketh haſt to bear fruit.* Hinc omnium prima Amigdala menſe *Januario, Martio* vero pomum maturat. *Bochartus. Hier. Nat. Hiſt Lib.* 16. *Cap.* 25. *Druſ. Cent.* 1. *c.* 57. *R. Kimchi in verbo* Shakad.

the year: So when young men shall bring forth the fruit of repentance, Faith and Holiness, that pleaseth the Lord. He hath a special delight in Young men who truly fear and serve him, *Hos.* 11. 1. *When Israel was a child then I loved him.* One of the Ancients observeth that Christ loved his youngest disciple best. *John* was the beloved disciple, & he is reported to be younger at his first Calling then any of the Disciples of the Lord Jesus. And we find in Scripture how the Lord blessed little children when they came to him, or were brought to him *Mark.* 10. 13, 14, 15, 16. *They brought young children to him --- and when Jesus saw it --- he said, suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, --- and he took them up in his armes and blessed them.* You young Ones hearken, would you have the Son of God to bless you? O come to him *now*, in the dayes of your youth and he will surely bless you, for his Armes are open to receive you. And such are the special subjects of a gracious promise *Pro.* 8. 17. *They that seek me early shall find me.* If you will be perswaded to seek the Lord whilest it is yet *early dayes* with you, Christ hath promised that you shall find him, and everlasting life and happiness by him.

3. *Consider the danger of neglecting God in the dayes of youth.* It may be it will cost thee thy life, yea the life of thy soul for ever. Who knoweth but that the time of youth is the only

time which the Lord will allow you to repent & make your peace with God in, through Jesus Christ? If these golden dayes be lost, probably thou wilt be undon forever. I must needs tell you that for the most part it is so, that men are either converted in their youth, or not at all. We read of but one that was called at the eleventh hour. If a tree do not blossome in the Spring it is commonly dead all the year after; So they that are not converted in the Spring of their age are rarely converted at all. Now & then *one* is converted in old age but such examples are exceeding rare especially it is true with respect unto those that have in the dayes of their youth lived under the meanes of grace, heard many Sermons, experienced frequent strivings of the Spirit of God with their hearts: if they remain unconverted until the daies of their youth are past & gone, the Lord usually giveth them up to judicial hardness of heart that they shall never be converted, never saved. Young men think sadly of it in the fear of God.

4. *Consider what Examples have been set before you of early conversions.* Have you not read or heard of those that have turned to God in the daies of their Youth? nay that in their childhood the fear of God hath been planted in their hearts, that they have no sooner began to have the use of reason, but one might discern

discern signs and effects of grace in their souls. There is a * book which many of you have in your houses that giveth an account of thirteen Children, the eldest of them not above fourteen years old, some of them not seven years old some not so much, that nevertheless it was evident that the fear of God & unfeigned love to Jesus Christ was wrought in their hearts. And there is a printed Relation of ‖ a child that died not long since in this countrey, who for several years before his death had his heart changed & was made a new Creature. O how may this shame many young ones that are here before the Lord this day, who are elder then that child was, it may be 15 year old, nay perhaps 20 year old; and for all that in a natural Christless estate to this day. Lamentable is thy condition that hast lived so long under meanes of grace, and yet continuest an unconverted creature. God be merciful to thee and help thee to think of it.

5. *Consider, you have a great Work to do before you goe out of this world, & but a little time to doo it in.* As young as you are, you have much sin to repent of, and to obtain the pardon of; Original sin thou art guilty of, and that must be mortified, And who can declare how many

* *Mr. Janeway's Token for Children.*

‖ *John Clap.*

many actual sins thou hast committed in words thoughts and deeds, that have been evil! and all those to repent of and endeavour that they may be mortified; and but little time to be attending works of this nature: for what is your life? It is but a vapour that appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away *Jam.* 4. 14. If a man have a long journey to go in a winters day he had need to set out betimes. Thou hast a long journey to goe, is it not a long journey from earth to heaven. and but a winters day to dispatch this journey? When once the short day of life is expired, then it will be too late. There is no work in the grave whether thou art going. O then up betimes be going, be doing, and the Lord be with thee.

By way of Direction.

1. *Beware of those sins especially which they that are in their Childhood and Youth are most subject unto, and apt to be carried away from God by.* 2. Tim. 2. 22. *Youthful lusts*, i. e. those sins which Youth is mostly exposed unto. It is infinite mercy to be kept pure from the corruptions of Youth. If ever you should find grace to repent of the sins of *Youth* & so obtain the pardon of them, yet they will be bitterness & shame to you all your dayes. Those vanities of Youth which now thou art so foolish as to delight in, it may be they will be a trouble to thee forty years hence, should'st thou

thou live so long. Doth not Job complain, saying, *Thou makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth, Chap.* 13. 26. And did not holy David pray as in Psal. 25. 7. *Remember not the sins of my youth.* And doth not converted *Ephraim* make an humble confession concerning the sins of his youth, *Jer.* 31. 19. *I was ashamed, yea even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.* So it is that the remembrance of the sins and vanities of youth, are matter of reproach and shame a long time after: yea the very thought of them doth fill the soul that is truly converted, with an holy confusion of face. Beware then of the the sins of youth. To instance in some particulars: Pride is a sin that young ones are very much under the power of: hence we see that young people are strangely addicted to vanity in Apparrel: Proud Fashions they must and will follow, there is no perswading them to the contrary: but beware of that sin. So for stubbornes and Disobedience to Superiors, it is an evil that Youth is very subject unto. You that are servants, young men and Maids that are here before the Lord, have you not been guilty of stubborn, disobedient carriage towards your Masters? though God in his Word tells you that you ought to be obedient to them with fear and trembling, *Eph.* 6. 5. And you that are children have not you disobeyed your Parents? Thou hast been dis-

disobedient to thy Father sometimes, but especially to thy mother. Thy heart may ake to think what is like to come on thee if thou repent not speedily: Did you ever know any dye upon the Gallows, but they confessed they had been guilty of this sin, and thereby provoked the Lord to leave them unto those things which have brought them to untimely, unhappy ends? And this is but according to what the Scripture speaketh, *Prov.* 30. 17. *The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the Ravens of the valley shall pick it out and the young eagles shall eat it.* Intimating that such children are like to come unto miserable and shameful deaths at last. Again, Lying is a sin which Childhood and Youth is for the most part deeply guilty of, *Psal.* 58. 3. *They go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.* How natural is it for Children to commit a fault, and then to excuse it by telling a lye! Art thou a lying child? then the Devil is thy Father, and except thou repent of this sin and beware of it for the time to come, when once thy soul is out of thy body, it must be cast into that lake which burneth with fire & brimstone which is the second death, *Joh.* 8. 44. *Rev.* 21. 8. So for breaches of the seventh Commandment, they are *youthful Lusts*: Wherefore *Solomon* such that he looked out of the Window of his house, & discerned among the youths a young man void of understanding

Understanding, and he was going to an Whore house like an Ox to the slaughter, or a fool to the correction of the Stocks, not knowing that it is for his life, nor considering that her house is the way to Hell, going down to the Chambers of Death, *Prov.* 7. 7. *&c.* Young men whose natures are not changed by the regenerating grace of the Spirit of God, do usually live in some unclean lust or other, Either Fornication, or self-pollution or in secret wanton pranks of darkness. You young men whose consciences accuse you of guilt before the Lord in respect of these evils, I charge you in the name of God, that you humble your selves deeply in his sight for past Transgressions, and sin no more as ever you desire to escape eternal Damnation, Though these cursed lusts may be as dear to you as life and limbs, yet better to *pluck out the right eye, to cut off the right hand, than that thy whole body should be cast into hell fire, where the worm dyeth not and where the fire never shall be quenched.*

Again, *Sabbath-breaking* is a sin which Young ones are often found guilty of before the Lord. There was a † young man (whom many of you have heard of) that came to an untimely end, and the sin of Sabbath-breaking made way to his ruin: when he should have been hearing

† *Thomas Savage, who was executed at Ratcliffe-Cross Octob.* 28. 1688.

hearing the word on the Lords day, he would rather go to wicked Houſes, that at laſt God was ſo provoked with him, as to leave him to commit a capital ſin, upon the Sabbath day, for which he was brought to deſerved execution. And when in priſon he ſaid to ſome that came to viſit him, *O a wretch that I was, I ſtudied how I might ſpend the Lords day in the Devil's work: that time which I ſhould have ſerved God in, I did moſt for Satan in it. O* (ſaid he) *tell young men from me, that the breaking of the Sabbath is a dangerous and coſtly ſin.*

And therefore young men beware of that ſin. *Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy*, or you will never remember your Creator as you ought to do.

Once more, Sinful *Company-keeping* is an evil that young men are apt to be drawn away from God their Creator by. Many an hopeful young man, that hath been well, inſtructed, that hath had great Convictions upon his Spirit, and friends that wiſhed him well have been comforted in him; yet hath afterwards fallen in with bad company, & that has prov'd the eternal ruin of his ſoul. I have known young men that upon ſick-beds and death-beds, have made lamentable cries. *O my ſinful Company-keeping hath undone me for ever!* Therefore let young men remember what the Scripture ſpeaketh to them, *My ſon, if ſinners entice thee conſent thou not. Walk not thou in the way*

of

of them, refrain thy foot from their path, Prov. 1. 10, 15. Again, *He that walketh with the wise shall be wise, but a Companion of fools shall be destroyed* Chapt. 13. 20. Young man, would'st thou not be destroyed? then be not a companion of Fools. Remember also what David saith, and follow his Example, *Psal.* 26. 4, 5, --- 9. *I have not sate with vain persons. I have hated the congregation of evil doers & will not sit with the wicked. Gather not my soul with sinners.* When thou diest, thou wouldest not have thy soul to be gathered to the place where sinners must be forever; then sit not with them, hold not Familiarity with them now: for they that are thy Companions and thy Familiars here, are like to be so to Eternity.

2. *Hearken to good Instruction.* In the holy Scriptures God himself instructs you, and therefore let young ones be diligent in reading the Scripture, that is the way to become like unto *Timothy*, to whom it was said, *From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto Salvation, through the faith that is in Christ Jesus.* 2. Tim. 3. 15. And when David had propounded that Question, *wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?* The Answer given is, *by taking heed thereto according to thy word*, Psal. 119. 9. For the most part it is so that the wayes of young men need cleansing. Youth is commonly the unclean part of a mans Age, but those

those young men that will make conscience to order their wayes & walkings according to the Word of God, shall thereby be cleansed. And the Word preached and publickly dispensed, is a meanes appointed by the Lord for the instruction of young ones that they may learn the fear of God, *Deut.* 31. 12, 13. *Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and that their Children which have not known any thing may learn to know the Lord.* And therefore mind seriously what the Ministers of God speak in his name. Mind it young men, lest you mourn at last and say *How have I hated instruction, and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor enclined mine ear to them that instructed me!* Yea; and hearken to the good instructions which you receive from those whom God hath set over you. Have you not Masters, Fathers, Mothers, that admonish you, & give you good counsel from day to day? despise them not. Doth not the Scripture say to you, *Hear ye children the Instruction of a Father.* Prov. 4. 1. And again, *My son hear the Instruction of thy Father, and forsake not the Law of thy mother.* Chapt. 1. 18. Eternal woe is like to be the portion of those Children, that regard not what Father and Mother say to them. Remember Eli's sons, they were proud and head-strong; their Father reproved them and exhorted them to amend

amend their wayes, it is said, *notwithstanding they hearkned not to the voice of their Father, because the Lord would slay them*, 1. Sam. 2. 25. Art thou the young man that wilt not obey the voice of thy Father when he giveth thee good counsel? this is a sign that the Lord will *slay thee*: a sad sign that thou art appointed for some terrible destruction at the last.

3. *Remember those things, which if duly thought on, may cause you to remember your Creator in the dayes of your Youth.* e. g. Think sadly of the Preciousness of Time, that so you may pass the time of your sojourning here in fear. You Young men, are exceeding apt to mispend precious hours, nay dayes in sin and vanity, but it is because you do not consider how precious time is. Are not some that were once your companions in sin, dead, & (as there is cause to fear) dropp'd down into hell? they would give worlds (were it in their power) to enjoy that precious time that is left, and can never be regained. Shortly your time to remember your Creator in will be past and gone for ever. Remember also the worth of your own souls, *What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* If he gain the whole world and lose his own soul, what is he profited? Young men and children do you think of this? as young as you are you have immortal souls that must either be saved or damned, that when once you are dead, your souls must go to be either

either in Heaven or Hell to all eternity. And *REMEMBER DEATH* which may be upon you ere you be aware of it. Thou knowst not but that this night thy ſoul may be taken from thee. It hath been truly ſaid, * *An old man hath death before his face, but a young man hath death behind his back*, that may overtake him before he thinks of any ſuch thing. Children may dye as well as others, *Rev.* 2. 23. *I will kill her children with death.* I remember, I have ſomewhere read of a ſerious godly Child, that would not ſpeak vain words, like other children, but was careful to improve his time well, and being asked the reaſon of his Serioufneſs, *O* (ſaith he) *I remember that I muſt dye*: When ſome replied to him, You are Young, and may live many a fair day, what ſhould *you* think of death for? *Nay* (ſaid he) *I was in the Burying-place, and there I ſaw a grave that was ſhorter than I am.* So Children, look into the *Burying-place*, and there you will ſee Graves that are ſhorter than you are: there you will ſee that thoſe that have been as young as you are, and younger too, have dyed and bin put into their graves, and therefore it may be ſo with you. O then Remember your Creator in the dayes of your Youth. And remember the day of Judgment. As Solomon in this Context ſaith, *Know, O young*

* *Aquinas.*

young man, that God will bring thee to Judgment. Young men are apt to put the Thoughts of Death and Judgment far away, and therefore they remember not their Creator. Think with thy self, I must stand before Jesus Christ the Son of God at the great day, and what shall I then say to him? and what will the Lord in that Day say unto me? will he say, *Come thou blessed*, or will he not say to me, *Goe thou cursed.*

4. *Look unto Jesus Christ.* O betake your selves to Him. He calls from Heaven unto you young men and Children, that are before the Lord this day, go to *Him* by Prayer, and to *God* by Him. Some of you, when you are asked that Question, *Do you pray?* Answer, *I cannot pray*: You would do it, you say, but you know not how to pray. Why, get into a secret place, and there lift up thine eyes and heart to the Lord Jesus, and if thou canst say nothing else, yet say, *O thou Son of God have Mercy on me! O convert me and save my poor Soul!* who knoweth but the Lord from on high may look upon thee, since the Lord Jesus himself hath said, *They that seek me early shall find me.*

Tibi Domine.